

Progress versus Utopia

THE USE OF PLANS, EXAMPLES,
COMPLAINTS AND STANDARDS IN
IMPROVING PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

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Foreword

THE PROBLEM OF PROGRESS, PARTICULARLY of under-developed economies of Asia and Africa, has been receiving increasing attention of economists, political scientists and administrators in the post-war period.

This book contains four lectures on the subject in its Indian context delivered at the Indian School of Public Administration in February 1962, by Prof. John A. Vieg, Professor of Government, Pomona College and the Claremont Graduate School, who was at the time Fulbright Research Professor at the University of Delhi.

These four lectures emphasize the need for the use of modest targets in planning and programming, the power of the example of outstanding administrators in improving the quality of administration, the need for a proper system of redressing public grievances, and lastly, the development of a "passion for excellence" in administrators. Prof. Vieg feels certain that "increments" of progress achieved through the adoption of these devices in public administration "will add up to what at least past generations would have regarded as Utopia." I am sure that his treatment of this important subject will be read with interest and profit by all who are concerned with the problems of a developing economy.

V. K. N. MENON
Director and Principal

Indian School of Public Administration
New Delhi
31st December 1962



Preface

FOR A CALIFORNIAN TO BE IN INDIA IS TO BE about as far away from home as he can get. Presumably therefore he should be the perfect expert for advising Indians about their affairs. Yet with all due gratitude to the Fulbright program for making me thus dizzy with wisdom, it has been no part of my intention in this little book to try to tell either the people or the public officials of this burgeoning democracy how to manage their public business. In accepting the invitation of the Indian Institute of Public Administration to give these lectures, my aim was simply to "think out loud" about four key problems of administration in a free society.

New Delhi

12th February 1962

J. A. V.



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PROGRESS VERSUS UTOPIA

I

Incrementalism versus Millennialism

TO BE IN INDIA AT ANY TIME WOULD HAVE its compensations but, for an American student of politics and public administration, such a year as this (1961-62) provides extraordinary stimulation. From the other side of the planet he can watch his own country "get moving again" under the leadership of President Kennedy—and measure its progress, if he likes, by the recommendations embodied in the report of President Eisenhower's Commission on National Goals.

From a quarter way round the world he can observe the efforts of Europe's famous Six as they move into the second stage of the European Economic Community and also try to accommodate Britain, Denmark and various others among the not quite so famous Seven in a widening of the Common Market—all this in such a way as to avoid serious dislocations either within the Commonwealth or elsewhere.

Here in India he has the thrill of watching the world's biggest democracy launch its third Five-Year Plan of economic development and stage another national election, not to mention its coming to grips with the hard realities of international life in Goa and along the Chinese border. By raising his sights a bit he can also take note of divers significant political developments in Pakistan, Nepal and Ceylon.

Finally he is intrigued by the spectacle of the Russians announcing on the occasion of the 22nd Congress of the Communist Party—in addition to the diabolical machina-

tions of the Albanians, further hitherto undisclosed monstrosities on the part of Stalin, and the explosion of a 50-megaton bomb—a dazzling new 20-year plan guaranteed by 1981 to obliterate every vestige of poverty all the way from Minsk to Vladivostok.

THE WONDERFUL IDEA OF REMAKING THE WORLD

As one of my friends likes to say, it is enough to drive a man furiously to think. Here are men and nations cherishing visions which, if translated into reality, would transform the lives of more than a billion people. Their dreams, accomplished, would give the human species such a sense of achievement as to open the prospect of a future completely free from want or despair. But can the dreams be fulfilled—and will they?

It is a wonderful thing to live in an age when men are so generally able to think in terms of remaking the world and remolding it closer to the heart's desire—especially when they propose that the gains of civilization shall be mass gains widely and generously shared among all classes of people.

How dull, strange and depressing it would be for our generation, after all that we have seen, to go back even to the best of earlier times! We take progress—at least the possibility of it—so much for granted that the idea of going back to the period before the Age of Enlightenment and the beginning of the Industrial Revolution would be like turning our backs on the sunlight and going to live in a cave. Yet it might not be amiss to remind ourselves occasionally of the price our forbears had to pay in effort and in courage to formulate the idea of progress and bring it out into the open.

The Dark Ages began to dissolve with the rise of towns, the revival of commerce and the exchange of ideas generated as a by-produce of the Crusades. As fortune would have it, the works of Aristotle were also re-discovered about this time. In itself this was all to the good but, instead of increasing man's confidence in his own powers, initially the study of

Aristotle's writings had almost the opposite effect. It generated so great a deference to The Philosopher as to encourage the assumption that he had mastered all knowledge. Thus, the most anyone could ever hope to do thereafter would be to confirm what the great Macedonian had discovered 16 centuries before.

With the coming of the Renaissance and Reformation men began to think for themselves considerably more than in previous ages. However, only with the dawning of the age of rationalism in the 18th century did they come to have enough confidence in the power of human reason to believe that they could actually remold society as well as put a harness on nature to make it serve the needs of man. As this conviction spread over the Western world in the period of the Encyclopedists and the early stages of the French Revolution, there was tremendous exhilaration in the air. "Great was it in that dawn to be alive," wrote Wordsworth, "and to be young was very heaven!"

Unfortunately the French rationalists overdid it. They tried to change too much too soon and were misled into using force to compel recalcitrants to go along with their schemes. As a result, their whole approach became discredited and the bright dream of progress gave way to a dark wave of reaction. The Utopian socialists of the early 19th century did their best to revive the dream, to be sure, but without much success. Then came the Marxian socialists. In the *Communist Manifesto* and *Das Kapital* they first announced with considerable fanfare that they had discovered the scientific laws governing the very course of history and then went on to proclaim the inevitability of a social revolution which would some day end the age-old struggle between rich and poor and usher in a classless society.

Yet the impressions that had been left on men's minds by the excesses of the French Revolution were so vivid that they bred, notably among the British, Scandinavian and American peoples, an alternative conviction, namely that of the "inevitability of gradualism." This was nicely epitomized in the name chosen for themselves by Sidney and

Beatrice Webb, H. G. Wells, George Bernard Shaw and their fellow British egg-heads when in resolving to do something about "the social question" in industrial Great Britain they formed the Fabian Society. The net effect of all these developments was in some ways to arrest the pace of social and scientific development so that, as Alfred N. Whitehead once wrote, roughly speaking, up to 1914 the expectation of continuity was always greater than the expectation of change.

THE SEDUCTIVE IDEA OF A GOLDEN AGE

When one contemplates the strength of the tendency toward ancestor worship and the many brakes imposed on innovation by those having vested interests in the *status quo*, not to mention the ever-influential drag of inertia, it is relatively easy to understand how tradition becomes sanctified or, what is worse, solidified. Indeed the wonder comes to be not why there is so little progress but so much.

One of the many forms which deference to tradition takes is the idea that, sometime in a nation's past, it reached a Golden Age and that the highest goal which any succeeding generation could therefore set before itself would be to re-create the conditions and institutions of that earlier period. So it has been at times in Greece and Italy and Iran for example, and so to some extent also in Egypt, France, India and various other countries.

On first thought it might seem that the idea of such a utopia-of-the-past would provide the most desirable and powerful kind of impetus making for social and economic improvement. What better incentive could there be than to be able to say: If our forefathers were able to build such a splendid civilization in their day, surely we, their sons and heirs, can rebuild the social order in that same image today? What is more, by restoring their creation we can at the same time do honor to their memory . . . How could anything be more thrilling!

In actual fact however this is not the way nations forge ahead. The best stimulus any people can have—and by all

odds the finest tribute any generation can pay to its ancestors—is not the aim of duplicating or restoring their work but rather a determination to bring to the solution of present problems and the exploitation of current opportunities something like the same inventive zeal they had and also their same measure of courage and perseverance. The idea of bringing some ancient Golden Age back to life obviously has a seductive appeal but it simply has no power. Men can get excited and stay excited only by the thought of putting something genuinely of their own into what they are building. There is some satisfaction to be sure in nicely imitating the genius of an old master but it cannot begin to compare with the inner rewards that come from making something absolutely new, even if technically the craftsmanship be of a lesser or lower caliber.

It is a grievous mistake therefore for any nation to assume that the best formula for getting ahead is to hold constantly before its eyes a picture of itself in some by-gone Golden Age, mythical or otherwise. Any person, and especially any leader, adopting such a strategy puts himself, so to speak, in the position of a motorist trying to drive by keeping his eyes fixed on the rear-view mirror. The nation, like the car, will usually wind up in the ditch.

On the other hand the appeal of a utopia-of-the-future is equally deceptive and in some ways even more damaging to human aspiration and achievement. It is just as impossible for a given generation to repeal its history and create a new society totally devoid of all flaws or blemishes as to re-establish with perfection of detail a civilization that is past and gone. Such a Golden Society of the future can never be established because it exists only in the never-never land of some dreamer's imagination. Utopias are born not out of confidence in the general trend of things in a society but out of apprehension that conditions may never be good unless something desperate is done. Proclamations of utopia tend therefore to be signs of wishful thinking rather than guarantees of miracles about to be performed.

Communism, syndicalism and fascism have been the main movements of the 20th century offering such glittering

utopias-of-the-future and their records are most instructive. Not for them the modest objectives of democratic capitalism or democratic socialism. They could not abide the thought of gradual improvement and advancement year by year. Why tolerate the slow pace of evolution by consent when the harvest of the years could so easily be accelerated by a bit of well-directed violence? Why quibble over a little bit of bloodshed if for so small a price mankind might reach that pot of gold just beyond the horizon in half a generation instead of two or three or four?

Why not bide our time, said the great syndicalist agitator Sorel, until conditions are ripe and then usher in the noble age of trade union rule all at one full stroke through a climatic general strike? Happily for Europe, Sorel's great day never came. Syndicalism never had a chance to show its wares (and be shown up) except briefly during the 1930's in the Spanish province of Catalonia. But both communism and fascism have had their chance; indeed they are still having it. Once these experiments got under way, however, their leaders—or, should we say, the most astute among them—realized that it might not be so easy to deliver all the wonderful things promised right on time. There might be, well, "complications."

Marx and Engels had been conveniently vague about how long it would take to effect the transition from socialism to communism and Lenin followed in their lead. So too did Stalin, after a fashion. Yet he came close enough to naming a date for the attainment of the Marxist utopia that by the end of his regime he had put himself into the position of virtually having to force the Russian people to admit that they were then actually living in the communist paradise (and of course liking it). As for the prognostications and promises of Nikita Krushchov, we shall examine them below and likewise, though only briefly, the performance record of his erstwhile co-partner in utopian enterprise, Mao Tse-tung.

Turning next to the record made by fascism, Mussolini, once in power, showed something akin to realism. After a few wild promises to complete his utopia in a decade or

two, he later revised his time-schedule—as perforce he had done in the case of the railway system in order to make the trains run on time—and sought to assuage the deepening disillusionment of the Italian people by assuring them that, if only they remained strong in their fascist faith, they would gain “the primacy of the world.” When? “In the 21st century.” In the mean time, however, as U.S. Senator, then Professor, Paul H. Douglas observed, *IL Duce* insisted that “even statistics had an obligation to be loyal to the fascist regime.”

In Nazi Germany Adolf Hitler was not nearly so discerning. “Give us four years,” he said to the German people on the National Socialists’ accession to power in 1933; “if we have not by then fulfilled all our pledges, you shall have free rein to throw us out.” But 1937 dawned, not on the utopia promised in the “inviolable” Nazi party program, but on a Germany in which, as one unreconstructed citizen of the Weimar Republic put it, the situation which the common man found himself was about like this: “Don’t eat; Goering will eat for you! Don’t think; Hitler will think for you! Don’t talk; Goebbels will talk for you!” To the Fuehrer and his henchmen however, everything looked rather rosy. Shortly before the war he averred that the Third Reich would flourish for at least a thousand years. What a commentary on the Nazi formula for Utopia: it crashed just 988 years short of the mark!

This by no means ends the story of what has happened to the golden futures promised by the architects of fascism but there can hardly be much need to go further. Peron in Argentina was no more successful than his mentors in Germany and Italy, and as for Franco in Spain, the utopia which the Falangists promised in 1939 today seems as far away as ever.

What a bleak and dismal recital it all makes! Not content with successive increments of betterment year by year and decade upon decade, these millennialists bludgeoned and “buffaloed” their people into giving them the absolute power required for grandiose crash programs of social reconstruction. What they promised was “all this and heaven

too." What the people got was just about the opposite.

THE PRE-CONDITIONS OF PROGRESS

It is the thesis of this essay that, in comparison with the more modest but far more feasible designs for progress typical of modern democracies, the utopias promised by fascism, communism or any other "ism" are not only self-defeating but that, in return for whatever material benefits they may provide, they exact social or human costs out of all proportion to their worth. Leg over leg the dog gets to Dover, not by a single colossal jump. The "one, two, three—infinity" of honest incrementalism, beats the spurious magic of millennialism every time. For those who live in want or insecurity a little real lightening of their burdens year by year is worth more than a whole ream of paper perfection. Genuine progress always overtakes utopia.

Some portion of the proof of this proposition has already been adduced; the rest is yet to come. But let us turn now to the question of the prerequisites of progress: what conditions must necessarily be satisfied before the idea has a chance to work? To examine the question both logically and historically is to discover that there are at least four which are of major importance. At any rate no nation falling seriously short on any one of them could reasonably expect to make any notable advance. With compliments to J. B. Bury, Harry Elmer Barnes, R. V. Sampson and various others who have wrestled with this question, here they are:

1. Progress depends on intellectual self-confidence. It pre-supposes that the people of a nation, and especially its leaders, will be willing to trust their own ability and judgment when critical decisions require to be made. Positively they must believe in their capacity to reason things out for themselves; negatively they must be free from obsequious subservience either to great minds of the past or to those of contemporary foreign cultures.

2. A second pre-condition—the order of listing is no particular importance—has to do with popular attitudes

or assumptions about the value of life in the here-and-now as contrasted with the importance of the life presumed to be awaiting human beings after death. One thing that held the West back for centuries was the assumption that life on earth had no meaning except in terms of preparation for the life to come. The general disposition was to regard it as little more than a weary sojourn through a "vale of tears and sorrow" where hardship and suffering were almost to be welcomed because it was mainly by meeting them in a contrite spirit that one could earn his way to heaven.

Such conceptions rested, to be sure, on a sad distortion of Judaic-Christian teaching and now seem absurd. Yet they prevailed for many centuries. To what extent the Hindu belief in re-incarnation has encouraged a similar sense of resignation toward the ills of earthly existence is difficult for a person reared in another cultural tradition to understand. In any event, this much seems clear. Men will never be moved to work very hard for the improvement of conditions unless they believe that their present existence is worth while for its own sake and not merely as a preparation for some life to come.

3. The third pre-requisite for progress has to do with the conception men have of time. If people are indifferent to chronology, holding time to be something of little value, there will be little incentive to use it, to "make it count" so to speak and, howsoever advanced their civilization may be at any given moment, the prospect of further advancement will be severely limited. This is not to say, however, that progress is possible only for nations subscribing to what may be called the "upward-linear" view of history. It is equally possible for those holding to a cyclical view. The essential thing is that men think in terms of a potentially ascending line or spiral. (The word "potentially" is used advisedly. To assume the inevitability of progress is to reduce the possibility of it rather than the reverse.)

4. The fourth major requirement pertains to the assumptions people make about the nature of the universe. No substantial progress can be made—because none will even be attempted—if men believe nature to be arbitrary or

capricious and that she continually needs to be propitiated. Once they realize however that she asks only to be understood and that the laws of the universe are constant and consequently dependable, they gain enormous encouragement. Few incentives to progress are so powerful—or so necessary—as the conviction that the universe itself is fair and steady.

5. While these four conditions are undoubtedly the most essential, from a practical standpoint there is also yet a fifth which is of considerable significance. Men are creatures of habit. They have little natural taste for adventure. What is more, they are typically rather timid. Consequently progress, especially social progress, can hardly be other than slow and halting unless what Bagehot called the “cake of custom” can be broken. Not that the social order must be torn loose from its moorings; quite the contrary. Neither convulsions nor upheavals are conducive to solid achievement. But where social institutions have been all powerful, especially those of a political or ecclesiastical character, their authority must at least cease to be unquestioned. By the same token, where there have previously been rigid class distinctions, they must at least have begun to lose their prestige before any tangible progress can be made.

THE ROLE OF POLITICIANS AND ADMINISTRATORS

If these foregoing pre-requisites constitute the necessary conditions for progress, what then are the sufficient conditions? The possession of a sense of wonder, of curiosity, and of adventure is obviously basic. Hard necessity also serves as a spur to invention. It likewise helps if nature is bountiful and accessible. Then men have ample opportunity to explore both her own secrets and the secrets of their relations with each other.

For the kinds of progress that depend substantially on government however, and these constitute our special interest here, political leadership and administrative competence naturally play a major role. Given a favourable

environment, meaning one in which the possibilities of deliberate and constructive change are taken for granted, the highest function of the politicians is to help the people dream great dreams and to decide, broadly speaking, what they want, when, where and how. As for the administrators it is their role, as the experts regarding what is operationally feasible with the resources at hand, first to advise the politicians regarding practical considerations so that popular expectations may be held within reason and then to "make the great dreams come true."

Neither of these requirements can afford to be slighted. Where there is no vision the people perish and there certainly will be no progress. Informed, imaginative, responsible political leadership is indispensable. Of all the basic ingredients of progress this comes first. But open-eyed and plain-spoken administrative leadership comes close behind, for the administrators are the ones to say whether any given plan or program is actually "do-able" and, if so, at what cost. Theirs is the job sometimes, to be sure, of challenging the policy-makers to raise their sights but far more commonly of curbing the disposition of politicians to "promise the moon."

Whatever the case however and no matter what the need of the moment may be, the basis on which administrative officials should advise their political chiefs ought always to be the same, namely sober calculation of what can be accomplished during the given working period in the light of the techniques, facilities and personnel likely to be available. Ideally no government would ever promulgate an official plan—whether of the one, five, fifteen or twenty year variety—without the counter-signature of the permanent head of its civil service or, better yet perhaps, the head of its (hopefully independent) professional society of public administrators.

What a wonderful re-assurance it would be for the Russian people, for example if, assuming a genuinely independent Soviet Society for Public Administration, Mr. Krushchov's spectacular new 20-year Program, announced last fall bore the counter-signature of its Director under some such

statement as this : "On the basis of the growing competence of the Soviet Civil Service, of supplies and equipment already available or clearly in prospect, of the revenue and appropriation measures specifically indicated herein, and of the demonstrated competence of the reporting systems and control techniques presently in use throughout the country, we, the members of the Presidium of the Soviet Society for Public Administration, hereby guarantee the administrative feasibility of each and every project enumerated in this Program. It is our considered professional judgment that by 1981 the transition to pure Communism will in the main have been completed."

Given Mr. Krushchov's age, he himself is not very likely to be around then to "take the rap" should anything go amiss. But what a consolation it would be to any disappointed Russian, should there just possibly be one, to be able to ask an objective body like the S.S.P.A. what went wrong !

Whether some variant of this scheme (with the Director of this Institute naturally signing the pledge !) would provide comparable reassurance to the people of India as they adopt their less pretentious Five-Year Plans is not for me to say. But, to take a leaf out of American experience, the one President who ever permitted himself the luxury of a prediction *a la* Krushchov probably wishes there had then been an American Society for Public Administration around to restrain him. In the exuberance of his victory in 1928, President Hoover reportedly said, "Given a chance to go forward for another four years with the policies our party has followed in the past, we shall soon be in sight of the day when poverty will be abolished from the land . . . and there will be two chickens in every pot and two cars in every garage." Within a year this beautiful capitalistic dream had been rudely shattered and by 1932 Mr. Hoover's glowing promise had turned to ashes in his mouth. He was facetiously sued in 1932 during his second campaign by a disaffected American citizen for 18 cents, the then market price of that second chicken, which the plaintiff claimed he never got.

REGULAR ANNUAL INCREMENTS v. GREAT LEAPS FORWARD

There's no fun in hitting any man when he is down and it is no part of my intention here to wax sarcastic at the expense of Mao Tse-tung. He has troubles enough of his own making. Moreover he discloses so little about his "great leaps forward" that it is impossible to tell precisely either what has happened on the Chinese mainland or why.

With respect to achieving material progress, however—and especially a reasonably equitable sharing of such gains—the only sound formula is to reject the seductions of great leaps into glittering utopias, whether of communist, fascist, capitalist or socialist design, and concentrate instead on what can actually be accomplished year by year. It is always the part of wisdom, to be sure, occasionally to glance ahead and take careful note of the rate at which the nation is moving toward its long-range goals. It also makes sense, as occasion demands, to "step up the pace" a bit to make sure of getting past any special barriers along the way. But every administrator worth his salt knows that men can work at top speed for only so long.

The way to get the most "mileage" out of ordinary mortals is not by spectacular forced marches but by discovering their optimum pace, the pace they can sustain day in and day out, and then making sure that they maintain it. A "great leap forward" may be launched on a wave of universal and spontaneous acclaim but the atmosphere soon changes. Thereafter the leaders find that they can keep things going only by drumming up a war psychology with all that this implies.

Planning is essential to be sure and plans must needs be translated into programs. All governments, democratic and dictatorial alike, agree on this. Where they differ is mainly with respect to the scope or comprehensiveness of their plans, the extent of detail in their programs, and the speed with which they promise to reach the goals announced.

To note briefly the records made by some of the major democratic peoples since the war, West Germany, Italy and Japan have all made spectacular progress and this

with scarcely any government planning of production worth mentioning. Theirs has rather been the strategy of freedom—to be content with creating conditions under which every individual will have both good incentives and good opportunities to improve his condition.

It may be useful at this point incidentally to note the difference between the utopias of liberal capitalism and “sensible socialism” both of which rely on mixed economies and those of fascism and communism. Under democratic capitalism and, though to a lesser extent, under moderate socialism it is typically business through its advertising which conjures up and proclaims the glittering pictures of tomorrow, not government, except in the limited public sector. Thus if its golden promises fall short of their mark, it is business which is discredited rather than government itself. Consequently the state is in a position, in case of a recession or depression, to step in without resort to violence and do what needs to be done to promote recovery. This is quite different from what happens when a fascist or communist utopia comes a cropper.

But let us return to our analysis of the merits of incrementalism as the best formula for achieving progress of the kind that lasts. The United States Government had a National Resources Planning Board for a few short years before the war and has had a Council of Economic Advisers since 1946, but it has never yet had anything like a Five-Year Plan, to say nothing of officially promising a specific level of affluence by 1980 or 1985. The American method is incrementalism incarnate: here a boost and there a boost as felt needs and pressures dictate from one year to the next.

Nothing could be more typically democratic than the *modus operandi* of President Eisenhower in his effort to accelerate the pace of social progress referred to in the opening paragraph. Knowing that in the last analysis real progress depends far more on the people than on the government, he chose all the members of his Commission on National Goals from private life rather than from officialdom, insisted that it be financed entirely outside the public

treasury, gave the Commission a free hand in charting its course and, when its report was completed, submitted it not so much to congress as to the people themselves for study.

The "goals" recommended by the Commission, many of them for 1970, will, if accomplished, go a long way toward insuring as we say in the American Pledge of Allegiance, "liberty and justice for all." Without doubt many of the targets will be reached. A large number of them will even require substantial governmental aid. But the important thing is that the whole process is incremental to the "nth" degree and that, if some of the goals are not attained, the people will know they themselves are to blame rather than democracy.

France offers another and in many ways spectacular illustration of the genius of incrementalism. When V-E Day came, some of her leaders realized that only through a vast renewal could their economy sustain a national "return to greatness." Some French politicians agitated for the adoption of a comprehensive plan *a la* the Soviet pattern, but wiser counsels prevailed. The Fourth Republic almost deserves to be forgiven some of the grievous blunders it made in other fields because of the wisdom it showed in adopting the ingeniously simple Monnet Plan for the mechanization and modernization of the economy.

The strategy of this Plan, formulated and overseen by a staff numbering no more than 150 people, has been brilliantly incremental: to set explicit targets (and commit government support) only for the half-dozen products, facilities and services most vital to the infrastructure of the economy, such as steel, rail transport, electric power, and chemicals, but beyond this, to encourage individuals and business enterprises, using these basic resources, to produce whatever they want. The method has paid handsome dividends almost from the start and the result economically is not only a new France but a thriving one.

Incidentally one of the best proofs of the soundness of the French design for progress has recently come from Great Britain. With the agreement in January, 1962 of

the Trade Union Congress to participate with representatives of business and government in a proposed National Economic Development Council, the Chancellor of the Exchequer has announced that the British hope soon to launch a form of planned economy drawing heavily on French experience. It will be based very largely on voluntary cooperation between government, labor and management.

Meanwhile, as noted, Krushchov has won the approval of the 22nd Congress of his party for a program guaranteed within 20 years, he says, to create the material and technical base needed to fill the Soviet Communist "bowl of abundance," to "surpass the economic level of the most developed capitalist countries," to "move into first place for production per head of the population," and to ensure for the Russian people "the world's highest living standard." There are other gems which could be quoted from his 130-page report but this is perhaps enough to indicate its confident, utopian tone.

That the people of the Soviet Union have the ability and the resources to make most of this Communist dream come true some day many would agree. Krushchov's relentless drive for better management augurs well for Russia's future and he has our best wishes in all his efforts to improve the living standards of the Soviet people. Yet in the interest of retaining a sense of proportion regarding his claims it might be worth noting that if what he calls the decadent, capitalistic Americans were to try to "catch up with Russia" today, they would among other things have to "sink, destroy, tear up, wreck or abandon," as the Mason City (Iowa) *Globe-Gazette* reported last year ;

Three-fifths of their steel industry
 Two out of every three of their hydro-electric plants
 Two-thirds of their petroleum capacity
 Nine-tenths of their natural gas capacity
 Fourteen of every fifteen miles of paved highway
 Two of every three miles of main-line railway tracks
 Eight of every nine ocean-going ships
 Nineteen of every twenty of their cars and trucks

Forty million television sets
 Nine of every ten telephones
 Seven out of every ten private homes, and otherwise
 Approximately half of their standard of living.

Nor does the Kennedy administration propose to rest content with the present American gross national income of \$ 570 billion per year. The President's Council of Economic Advisers has just suggested as a target for 1970 a figure of \$ 825 billion.

But let us assume for immediate purposes that the Communists succeed in fulfilling every one of their grand material objectives. What then? We suspect that, come 1981, they will make what for them will be an astonishing discovery. They will find that, instead of swanky cars and spacious apartments, what men want most of all is simply to be free!

Unless the Russian political system be changed in such a way as to satisfy this basic yearning, no amount of economic affluence will ever make the people happy. The Communists will achieve their utopia only to find that what their citizens really want is the kind of progress that spells personal liberty. If Mr. Khrushchov is resolved to win for himself an abiding place in the respect and affection of the Russian people, all he has to do is to open the doors and windows of the mansion of Soviet Communism and let his fellow citizens luxuriate in the bracing air of freedom. In gratitude for this they would bless his name no matter how far the Communist Party falls short in achieving by 1981 the millennium promised in the new 20-Year Program.

CONCLUSION

Throughout this essay the emphasis has tended to be on the relative efficiency of different ways of achieving material progress. Far more important, however, is the problem of enhancing political or moral progress to which we have just referred. By far the most intriguing aspect of the new Communist program, if we may pay it the compliment

of taking it seriously, is its promise within 20 years to develop in the Soviet Union not merely a new economy but a new race of men, free from all the petty faults and vices which affect human beings in capitalist societies. Here especially we wish the leaders of the Communist Party success, for despite all the vaunted emphasis on equality and brotherhood in the Soviet Union, inequalities in income and amenities are markedly greater there than in the United States. As Charles W. Thayer observes in his new novel *Moscow Interlude*, the Soviet capital is a city of meticulous order and discipline for its workers and peasants but it is "a stronghold of privilege for the few."

Will utopianism work in the moral realm more effectively than in the material? Probably not. An individual may suddenly be born again spiritually to be sure and thus shed his evil tendencies, but hardly a whole society. For improving the characters of human beings no less than for improving the material condition, incrementalism is the only dependable strategy.

In both realms, the essential thing is to set reasonable targets and pursue them with all deliberate speed. Gradualism is the key to genuine progress of any kind. But let no one ever forget that gradualism may itself be graduated upward and that, as A. C. Pigou once wrote, it was never intended to be "a polite name for standing still."

* * *

This happens to be Abraham Lincoln's birthday. We Americans honor him mainly for the grandeur of his spirit. But he had greatness of mind as well and one of the wisest things he ever said has a direct bearing on our theme here today: when a nation is faced with a problem so complex and difficult that there simply is no quick solution for it, the thing to do is not to pretend that the situation is otherwise but rather be content with trying in good faith to put it as he said, "in the course of an ultimate solution."

2

The Power of Example

THIS IS AN AGE MARKED BY A GROWING awareness of the limitations on man's physical resources. Of food, clothing, housing, power, transport, paper and the like, we seldom seem to have enough and are obliged accordingly to make the best and most of what we have. Our utilization of such things tends therefore to be efficient.

But there is one commodity of which we human beings have a virtually unlimited supply and which, in consequence, suffers from the grossest kind of underutilization. Nay, that is too mild a phrase : it suffers from sheer and almost total waste. This is the familiar resource known as general advice—admonitions to the other fellow telling him to do perfectly what we ourselves could only do imperfectly at best.

Most fields of activity are not merely well-supplied with this commodity but over-supplied. Certainly that would seem to be the case with respect to public administration. If the basic principles of organization and management were not too easily discoverable for the pioneers, they have at any rate been expounded so often and at such length in this generation that by now almost the last thing needed by the profession, either in India or elsewhere, is any further adumbration of them.

We have laughed much, too much at the crack that if all the economists in the world were laid end to end, they still would not reach a conclusion. Our trouble in the study of public administration tends to be quite the opposite. When we are laid end to end, as in the pages of our

journals or on the shelves of our libraries, to the extent that we engage in the exposition of principles we invariably reach the *same* conclusion—and we do it over and over again. Thus our tendency is to go on piling up the same old sound advice and, because it is easy to prescribe but far harder to take and practise, much of it lies around unused. It seemed to me therefore that in accepting the invitation to give these lectures, one big blunder not to make would be throw yet another reformulation of first principles on the pile. It is already so huge as to stimulate indifference rather than exploitation. Exhortation has little power to improve administration anywhere, but example sometimes works wonders. What are offered in this lecture therefore, instead of further counsels of perfection, are several examples of able and dedicated administrators at work.

Not that there is always magic in example, however, even in a good one. On the very day of choosing the title for this lecture and thinking, naturally, how inspired everyone would be to emulate the men whose achievements were to be described and analyzed, there fell under my eye Frank Moraes's *India Today* and these two sentences literally jumped out at me :

Nehru's is a battle for time and against time. He has failed signally to infuse a single colleague with his demonic drive, his passion for social and economic justice, his political understanding, and his genius for communion with the people.¹

And as if this were not enough to warn me of the unreadiness of human beings to emulate a good model, one of my friends chanced on the following day to ask me to look carefully at the pedalling of the average bicycle rider on the streets of Delhi. "See," he said, "how easily some glide along—the 20 or 30 per cent who pedal with the balls of their feet rather than the arches ! Why do all the others insist on doing it the hard way ? Why, with all these good examples right beside them on the pavement, do they go

¹ *Op. cit.*, p. 21.

on making a slovenly and labored job out of something that could be pleasant exercise and provide aesthetic delight to the observer as well?"

Notwithstanding these sober reminders that no method is ever quite fool-proof, it seems to me eminently worthwhile for students of administration to try to examine from life itself the way in which talented, dedicated and effective administrators operate. It has been my great good fortune as an American citizen to have observed during the past twenty-five years many able and devoted public officials at work and to have profited along with thousands, yea in some cases millions of others from the excellence of their services. From the whole group we take for analysis here only five men, two state and three municipal officials.

Of these, two served in the midwestern state of Iowa, the state of my birth and also of my residence before the war; the other three have served in California, where we have lived since 1945. Fortunately most of them are happily still in the prime of life and service, though the most eminent among them, former Governor Earl Warren, no longer lives in California. He moved to Washington in 1953 to become Chief Justice of the United States.

Although scores of former and current federal officials command my admiration, not least among them Paul H. Appleby, so well known to public administrators in India, under whom it was my privilege to work in Washington during the war, none of them is here included. The explanation is very simple. In no case was it possible to observe them for as long a period or from as good a vantage point as the five selected.²

Robert E. Buchanan

(Director, Iowa Agricultural Experiment Station)

One of the finest dividends that came to me as a professor

² Writing this lecture some 12,500 miles away from home and without access to written records has made it necessary for me to "paint with a rather broad brush" in certain places. For the purpose intended, however, this is perhaps as much an asset as a liability.

at Iowa State University during the years 1937-42 was an opportunity to observe the operations of the Iowa Agricultural Experiment Station at Ames under the superb leadership of its then Director, R.E. Buchanan. As one of the nation's leading research institutes its staff was at that time working on a wide range of questions relating to problems of production, credit, marketing, soil conservation, farm management, home economics and, as a major issue in economic policy, the question of maintaining the historic independence of the states as over against the central government in agricultural matters during a period when Washington was vastly expanding the national farm program.

Gentleman and scholar, Dr. Buchanan was then in mid-career and bringing to his work all his great strength of mind, energy and character. It had been as a professor of bacteriology that he had gained his first laurels but by the 1930s most of his time was absorbed in administrative work, partly as Dean of the Graduate School but mainly as Director of the Experiment Station.

Secrets of Success. In discharging these latter responsibilities his prime assets seemed to me to be these: *first*, a sense of excitement and adventure about the scores of projects included in every year's program and a conviction that each one was important; *second*, confidence in the members of the Station's staff coupled with strict but friendly impartiality in all his dealings with them; *third*, firm, steady direction of the whole research program though requiring perfect clarity in the statement of aims and methods for each project to begin with and then just the right number and kind of progress reports until the job was finished; *fourth*, a keen sense of priorities, always knowing on any given day what ought to be done in order to insure the nice articulation of all the activities of the Station; and *finally*, an unusually good way of helping each man to "make the most" out of his research and then of helping him get it published promptly and in an influential journal.

The Station was of course a tax-supported institution and another of the secrets of Dr. Buchanan's success lay in his ability to clarify research needs and identify them with the interests of the people of the state. Only in this way was it possible to persuade the Iowa Legislature to vote the appropriations required to support a continually expanding research program. Incidentally this took, as we say, "quite some doing" for the new-type social science projects but here as elsewhere the Station benefited from the Director's unceasing efforts to make sure that its program and problems were thoroughly understood. One of his happy inspirations had been to form a Farmers' Advisory Committee for the Station—one of the first if not the first such advisory committee in the nation—and its members provided both guidance to the research program and public support for it.

Mr. Buchanan also contrived to augment the funds of the Station from other, that is to say, private sources but always took care to protect its right (and at the same time to explain its responsibility) to publish all its findings solely with regard to considerations of the public interest.

Major Achievements. Several accomplishments stand out vividly in the perspective of a quarter century. Thanks to Dr. Buchanan's leadership (and the imaginative enterprise of Theodore W. Schultz as head of the staff in economics and sociology) the scope of the research program was greatly broadened during these years in so far as the social sciences were concerned and for the first time they began to play something close to their full part in the work of the Station. Similar developments also occurred with regard to several of the disciplines in the natural sciences which had theretofore played only a minor role in agricultural research. Up to that time chemistry, botany, zoology and genetics, for example, had been only tangentially related to the program but now they came to be substantially involved, alike to their own advantage and that of the Station.

Perhaps the most dramatic advance was that of recognizing the immense significance of statistics for research in plant breeding, animal husbandry and many other fields of experimentation. Having helped promote the establishment on the campus of one of the pioneer university statistical laboratories in the United States, Dr. Buchanan proceeded at once to urge every section of the Station to make full use of it, wherever appropriate, to sharpen its techniques of analysis. Within a matter of months two groups on the staff found themselves facing a crisis. To their profound dismay both the agronomists and the experts in animal husbandry discovered that because of defects in research design much of the work they (and their predecessors) had done during some 35 years previous was practically worthless from the standpoint of genuine comparability.

What to do? Go on trying to pretend that the variations in procedure had been insignificant and thus run the risk not merely of self-deception but of invalidating the reputation of the Station *or* muster the professional courage to discard the whole vast pile and start afresh? The Director's advice to both groups was the same—not to let false pride keep them from making a new start based on the hard requirements of scientific statistical analysis. In the case of the agronomists he succeeded quickly. Recognizing that, taken separately, many of the projects completed during previous decades had been of high quality, they nevertheless "faced the facts" regarding the issue of comparability, put the findings of earlier years gently to one side, and proceeded to open a bright new chapter in agronomic research at Iowa State University.

With the staff in animal husbandry, however, it was harder going. Loath to "give up" the fruits of so much past labor, they went on for a time doggedly insisting on the significance of earlier research findings even though rigorous statistical analysis proved this so-called "significance" to be highly questionable. In due course, however, they bowed to the inevitable and "came around." In neither case did the Director order the staff to change its methods. His approach was rather to compel them to accept

"the law of the situation" and yield to the dictates of science of their own accord.³

Nor was this the only instance in which he had occasion to take disappointment philosophically. Then as now American agriculture was suffering from chronic over-production with respect to several major crops. Thinking that new markets might be found through the development of by-products, Dr. Buchanan also helped promote the establishment on the campus of an agricultural by-products research laboratory. Although it paid some dividends, these were far smaller than he had hoped for. Yet, as a true scientist, he realized that the rewards of research often come in the searching as much as in the finding. Nothing attempted, nothing accomplished. Not every calculated risk can be expected to pay off handsomely.

Finally it was due to Dr. Buchanan's leadership more than that of any other person that Iowa State College (as it was called until as late as 1950) endeavored to respond in a constructive way to the strains and tensions arising from New Deal efforts to solve "the farm problem" by drafting a careful statement of the rights and responsibilities of an individual state in this field of public policy. This took shape around 1940 in two pamphlets entitled "The Role of the Land Grant College in Government Agricultural Programs." These two documents have formed an important landmark in federal-state agricultural relations ever since.⁴

³ Lest any reader adjudge the Director guilty of wasting public funds (and thus setting a poor example) by *not* ordering the staff in animal husbandry to disregard their earlier findings once he had become convinced of their partial deficiencies, perhaps two observations should be made. If these staff members had blithely or arrogantly ignored the reports of statistical weaknesses in their work, Dr. Buchanan would perhaps have resorted to the use of administrative authority to force a change. But knowing through long experience that professors, of all people, cannot be told what or how to think, he deemed it wiser to let them brood until their professional consciences compelled them to make the change. Events proved that he was right.

⁴ For helpful advice and perspective regarding Director Buchanan's work, the author would like to acknowledge his indebtedness to Carl C. Malone, a colleague of those days, who is now in India as Consultant in Farm Management to the Ford Foundation.

John Ames
(City Manager, Ames, Iowa)

Another dividend on living in Ames, Iowa, during those years was the advantage of observing in action one of many able men who have helped during the past half century to build a new profession in the Western world and especially in the United States, namely that of City Manager. John Ames was a "natural" as the first manager of the pleasant city of Ames not because of the interesting coincidence in names but because of his unusual talent and temperament.

The council-manager form of municipal government originated in Staunton, Virginia in 1912 but it was not until 1920 that the people of Ames decided to try the plan. Their concern at that time however was not so much efficient municipal administration in general as thoroughly competent management of their two basic utility services, water and power. Those were the days when the battle over public ownership and operation raged rather fiercely in many American cities and the devotees of "municipal socialism" in the community realized that only a first-class engineer could insure success for the experiment in Ames. This was his first great service—to put both the water system and the electric system on a sound basis from every angle and then to insure their smooth and efficient operation year after year. But it was only the beginning. Like the people of Iowa in general, the citizens of Ames were rather conservative. They were not opposed to change once they were convinced a change would pay for itself and be generally beneficial but they had no taste for novelty just for its own sake.

Mr. Ames, competent engineer that he was, appreciated their philosophy and always conducted himself accordingly. He did his best to alert the mayor and council to the problems of the city long before its needs had any chance to become acute but, having done this, he never pestered them to act before they thought the time appropriate.

Thus in due course several major improvements were made. A capacious, gently-sloping underpass was built

under the principal railway running through the city in order to permit of a smooth flow of traffic to and from the main business section. The street carrying "U. S. 30," the Lincoln Highway, through the city was widened as much as possible to accommodate a steadily growing stream of cars and trucks pending construction by the State Highway Commission of a much needed by-pass. Meanwhile new roads and streets were designed and built to relieve the heavy burden on major arteries in other parts of the community.

One of the main features of the city physically was that it was separated into an older and larger part called "downtown" and a newer, smaller but rapidly growing university section otherwise called the 4th Ward. Between the two lay a low flat stretching approximately a quarter mile on the west side of Squaw Creek and subject to overflow, especially when spring rains coincided with the melting of deep snows. The situation was made to order for mutual recrimination over city services but Mr. Ames was so meticulous in looking to the well-being of each section that civic discussions which might all too easily have led to endless wrangling remained at low (or zero) tension instead.

Through working harmoniously with both the planning commission and the council, Mr. Ames played a major role first in developing the beauty of a spacious, older park between the two sections and later on in acquiring and laying out a new one. To facilitate easier and safer access between "downtown" and the university section he accomplished the widening and re-surfacing of a rear road that had theretofore been little used. And whenever new subdivisions were established he did everything possible to make sure that streets and side-walks were laid out and water, sewer, gas and electric lines installed both promptly and properly.

Another accomplishment lay in the field of law and order. Through intelligent and never-ending concern for the safety of life and property the city manager developed for the community such a competent and helpful police force that crime never had a chance to become a problem. It was

conspicuous by its absence rather than in the form of zealous efforts to arrest and prosecute after assaults and thefts had been committed.

None of these achievements have much drama in them to be sure. Yet they are the stuff out of which good residential communities are made. Through just such quiet, competent management John Ames contributed handsomely for over 20 years to the development of one of the most attractive and best-governed small cities in the American Middle West.

Earl Warren

(Governor of California, 1943-53)

Former Governor Earl Warren is the only elective official whose record we propose to examine. Since 1953 he has been exercising his extra-ordinary talent, including that for administration, as Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States but for slightly more than ten years preceding his appointment to this august tribunal he served with outstanding success as Chief Executive of the State of California.

Since the gubernatorial office in India affords no sound clues as to the nature of the state governorship in America, let it be noted that the term "Chief Executive" is used here advisedly. The office of Governor is modeled roughly on that of the President. Directly elected by the voters, he is their highest political spokesman as well as their best assurance of efficient public administration.

He is independent both of the state legislature and of the President. Like the President however, he is free, both in law and in fact, to be as big as he can in his service to the commonwealth and this is exactly what Earl Warren did all the time he presided over the government at Sacramento.

Hiram Johnson's Example. Fifty years ago California was blessed, in Hiram W. Johnson, with its first truly great governor and Warren took Johnson for his model. That is

one of the prime secrets of his success. Here is a clear case where the power of example really worked. Johnson became the hero of a whole generation of Californians by waging and winning around 1910 a titanic struggle against one of the greatest combinations of private economic power ever to get a strangle hold on an American state. This was the now tame and respectable Southern Pacific Railway but for a decade or more prior to 1910 it controlled both the Republican and Democratic parties and dominated both the executive and legislative branches of the government. Even Johnson's father was a part of the "S.P. machine" but that only made him the more determined to rescue the state from its nefarious control. No wonder that his victory and his conception of the high office of Governor impressed the idealistic young Warren !

Mr. Warren's public offices before his election to the Governorship in 1942 were mainly two. Prior to 1939 he served for a number of years as District Attorney of Alameda County (of which the big city of Oakland is the county seat). During the four years immediately preceding his first gubernatorial victory he served, though a Republican, (the office is an elective one) as Attorney General in the administration of Democratic Governor Culbert Olson.

From the beginning he exhibited a talent both for politics and for administration and also a brand of courage of the same kind as Johnson's. The foundation of his success lay in a simple but most impressive personal dignity, in scrupulous honesty, and in intelligent and unremitting dedication to the public interest. Of the many difficult problems by which he was confronted as a war-time Governor it is not possible for me to speak, not having been at that time one of his constituents. But there is one policy for which he fought during those years which must be mentioned because it yielded such immense benefits once peace had been restored. That was the policy of keeping tax rates at or near their then existing levels even though surpluses were piling up in the treasury because of war prosperity.

Main Accomplishments. Governor Warren had the foresight to see that once the war had ended there would be an enormous backlog of urgently-needed public works to build—of highways, freeways, bridges, dams, schools, colleges and the like which had been deferred first because of the Depression and then because of war-time shortages of materials and man-power—and, on top of this, tremendous demand for expansion of facilities and services occasioned by a new tidal wave of migration toward the West Coast. Consequently he insisted that state tax rates be reduced only slightly and temporarily, if at all, that debts be paid off whenever legally possible, that a specific \$75 million Rainy Day Fund be established, and that large surpluses be allowed to accumulate in special funds based on earmarked revenues. Chief among these latter was the Highway Fund based on the motor fuel or gas tax. If California now has a magnificent toll-free highway network unencumbered by heavy indebtedness, much of the secret lies in this enlightened policy of sensible saving for a rainy day.

But this was only one of his accomplishments. Prior to his term as Governor, prison administration, for example, had suffered from political interference and there had been occasional riots and scandals in one or two major correctional institutions. His solution was to find the ablest penologist in the country, appoint him Director of Corrections, give him a free hand and back him to the hilt. The result is that, from that day to this, California has had one of the most enlightened prison systems in the United States. Incidentally, the same man has been continued as Director of Corrections ever since. Neither of Warren's two successors has had any reason to make a change.

California was already an industrial giant before 1939 but war-time industry gave it a tremendous boost and post-war growth threatened to expose it to serious labor-management-strife. Once again, however, Governor Warren took time by the forelock and demonstrated the priceless value of good leadership. On the one hand he persuaded the Legislature to expand the State's Department of Industrial Relations so that it would be able to deal more promptly

and effectively with wage and other disputes whenever they arose ; on the other he urged the superiority of prevention over remedy. The University of California having a major campus in each of the State's two gigantic metropolitan areas, he recommended the establishment of parallel Institutes of Industrial Relations at Berkeley (in the Bay area) and at Los Angeles. No one can say, of course, precisely how much credit should go to these three agencies for the industrial peace with which the State has since been blessed, but it certainly must be considerable.

Yet Governor Warren did not always succeed in getting his recommendations accepted. Provision of adequate medical care and orderly payment of the costs involved remain two of America's unsolved problems. As early as 1945, however Warren proposed that California take the lead and show how the issue might be met through state action instead of being allowed to fester until it could only be resolved through further enlargement of the already colossal federal bureaucracy and a further increase in the national budget. What he urged as the best way of forestalling genuinely-socialized medicine (in which there is always danger that the individual will be treated simply as a statistical unit rather than as a human being) was a state-administered plan of compulsory insurance for medical care financed through contributions made by both employees and their employers, much as in the case of the federal system of old age and survivors' insurance, commonly called O.A.S.I. or simply Social Security.

For this, however, the State was not ready, not to mention the California Medical Association, just as President Truman was to discover, three years later, that neither the nation nor the American Medical Association were ready for a federal plan of this kind. It is greatly to his credit however that he tried, and the people of California may yet live to regret that they did not do their part and put enough pressure on the Legislatures to persuade it to adopt his recommendations.

To sum up, during his three terms, Warren insured the people of California of public service of the highest quality

and also helped them to effect a smooth and constructive transition from war to peace. Through a decade which saw the population of the State increase roughly from seven to over eleven million (it is now approaching seventeen), he set them a marvellous example of that rare feat of combining moderation in policy with genuine vigor in execution. Prior to his time only two Governors had ever been elected to a second term but Warren was re-elected twice and might well have been elected to a fourth term in 1954 had he not been appointed Chief Justice.

Inspiration to Successors. Just as the power of Johnson's example worked on Warren himself so the power of his own example has worked since on his successors. Though neither of them have perhaps had ability comparable to his, both have tried hard to emulate his style, Goodwin J. Knight, his fellow Republican, without saying so specifically (probably because his earlier reactionary criticism of Warren would then have had to be "explained") and Edmund G. "Pat" Brown, the present governor, explicitly. Mr. Brown, a Democrat, had been Attorney General first in Governor Warren's "cabinet" and then in Mr. Knight's. He had gotten along well with both, but especially with Warren. When he ran against the conservative Republican William F. Knowland in 1958, one of the most amazing features of the campaign was Knowland's reticence about mentioning either Mr. Warren or Hiram Johnson (whose place Knowland had taken in the U.S. Senate) while his Democratic opponent Brown proclaimed in almost so many words: "Vote for me. If I win, I'll do my level best to follow the magnificent example set by Hiram Johnson and Earl Warren!"

Of such ingredients are enlightened policies and effective administration sometimes made. (If Governor Warren had a political fault, as he almost certainly did, it was probably that he was too little the conventional partisan Republican. Among his admirers there are some who insist that had he been more openly critical of Democrats generally, he would have had a far better chance to land the G.O.P. presidential nomination in 1948 or 1952 than he did).

Frederick W. Sharp
(City Administrator, Pomona, California)

As a youth Fred Sharp saw and experienced something of the adversity of the Great Depression in metropolitan Los Angeles. Just before the war he earned an M.A. in Public Administration at the University of California in Berkeley. During the war he served at sea with the United States Navy and for the first few years thereafter he worked as an executive aide to the city manager in one or two cities in northern California. This in brief was the preparation he brought with him to Pomona, California, around 1949 when that formerly sleepy city—just beginning to arouse itself to the opportunities (and dangers) latent in the mushroom growth of the Los Angeles metropolitan area—invited him to become its first City Administrator.

Less than "Manager." Under a special charter granted by the Legislature around 1911, Pomona had previously been operating under the defective Commission form of municipal government. Its charter was sufficiently flexible, however, to allow the elective commission (also called the council) to name a general manager for the city's business if they wished and, as a way of solving a number of rather baffling administrative problems, they decided to create the position of City Administrator and ask Mr. Sharp to fill it. The "heroic" decision would have been to have adopted the council-manager form recommended by the National Municipal League, by ordinance if possible but through a new charter if necessary. This, however, they were not prepared to do and so they temporized. Without vesting in the new office anything like the full range of authority a city manager ought to have at his disposal, they nevertheless contrived to persuade the public that they had now done everything essential to insure efficient administration of the city's business.

Accepting the position with his eyes open but in the spirit of making the plan work if goodwill and cooperation on his part could possibly make it work, Sharp began at

once to take stock of the city's needs and resources and, on advice of the Planning Commission and the Council, draw up plans and programs calculated to make Pomona a truly progressive city.

Parks and Schools. By dint of prodigious effort and a pace which after several years threatened his health for a short interval, the new administrator soon had a vast program of renewal and expansion underway. Firm decisions were made on which streets, old and new, were to be major arteries, and, once this had been decided, these were quickly widened and re-paved to enable them to carry the ever-increasing streams of traffic. With new tracts and subdivisions being opened almost every week, Mr. Sharp made a special effort to see to it that the city and the school district cooperated in planning the location of parks and schools and playgrounds in such a way as best to serve the varied needs of the community at the lowest possible cost.

Water and Sewers. One of the many sad conditions that came to light during his initial reconnaissance of needs and resources was that in all too many cases key water mains and sewer lines had been installed on the assumption of a static population of around 40,000. It was anything but easy in the face of incessant demands for new facilities in the new subdivisions to insist that these old mains and lines be replaced with pipes of suitably enlarged capacity. Sharp persisted, however, and the burgeoning city has in consequence been spared the awful risks to which it would have been subject had the need for these vital facilities been sloughed over.

Yet the water and sewage problems had other dimensions too. In order to insure adequate supplies of water for a population which might some day easily reach 150,000, Mr. Sharp persuaded the city to take two major steps. Fortunately it had already long since joined the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California which had been organized in the 1920's to construct the famous 242 mile aqueduct from the Colorado River to the Los Angeles area. Now, under his prodding, it bought additional land several

miles beyond its limits in order to increase its ground supplies for residential use and also installed a filtration plant for the reclamation of industrial sewage so that such water could be used not once but several times. Meanwhile for the better handling of residential sewage he got Pomona to take the lead in organizing, with near-by Claremont and La Verne, the Tri-Cities Sanitary District, whose services have since that time come to be indispensable for all three municipalities.

Spacious Streets. Meanwhile comparable advances were made on several other fronts as well. Knowing that nothing sets off a community like broad, handsome streets and boulevards nicely dressed with sidewalks, markers, lights and trees, Mr. Sharp secured appropriations for the widening and beautification of no less than half a dozen major streets, several of them running the full length or width of the city.

One of these forms a special monument to his tact and zeal because, before the work of widening could actually begin, some hundred odd owners of property along either side had to be persuaded to dedicate from 10-to-20-foot strips at the front of their lots to the city absolutely free. When the council insisted on attaching this proviso to its approval of the program the Administrator had proposed, only Mr. Sharp believed the owners could be induced to deed these strips to the city. What made this all the harder to accomplish was that most of the persuading had to be done in the evenings on his own "free" time, when both husbands and wives could be found at home. It was a long, hard, time-consuming task but gradually all the people along the street caught his vision of the street's potentialities and the dedications were complete.

Off-street Parking. As every motorist knows, even a perfect street can be maddening if there is no place to park, particularly in a business section. To satisfy this need—and incidentally to save the central business district from losing all its customers to outlying shopping centres—Sharp induced the merchants in each of several key locations

to take a step which initially struck some of them as equivalent to digging their own graves. This was to form a small special purpose district, buy up all the properties in a convenient adjacent area, raze all the buildings on the premises, then pave the whole area and equip it with parking meters—all this at their own expense—just to bring potential customers to their doors! It took all of his persuasive talents to get the first district established but here again faith was justified by results. The city now has no less than half a dozen off-street parking districts and once lethargic Pomona has won nation-wide acclaim for its practical demonstration of how to solve one of the most baffling problems of the automobile age.

Underpasses. It is Pomona's fortune, partly good, partly bad, to be bisected (with parallel tracks all adjacent to each other) by two transcontinental railways, the Southern Pacific and Union Pacific. Since these run barely a stone's throw from the main business thoroughfare, it can easily be imagined what monstrous traffic jams a long freight train might cause, not to mention a passenger train stopping at the station near by. For over sixty years there had been periodic agitation for the construction of three strategic underpasses but nothing had been done—not one tangible thing.

Here again Sharp found the key to constructive action. Careful investigation of the facts convinced him that the trouble lay in the unduly high proportion of the cost the railways would be required to pay (in comparison with the city and the state) under the formula then prevailing. This point clear, he promptly enlisted the aid of the League of California Cities to get the Legislature to change the law. Once the formula had been made equitable, the log jam was broken. Now, after some 65 years of mere "talk," Pomona not only has three spanking new underpasses but, thanks to the civic exhilaration born of this achievement, plans are also well along for an attractive six-block shopping mall, free from vehicular traffic of any kind.

This is by no means the full story of Fred Sharp, city

administrator par excellence.⁵ There is no time, for example, to describe his unceasing efforts either to improve the competence (and compensation) of all the city's employees or to keep the general public informed on municipal affairs. But perhaps it is enough to explain why at mid-career he has already become a model worthy of emulation. There is a totality of dedication about the man which makes him the very definition of what a public servant should try to be.⁶

Richard Malcolm

(City Manager, Claremont, California)

My own home town of Claremont, California (population 12,500) has for the past four years or so had the immense good fortune to be managed by a public servant who in my judgment suits its needs and temperament quite as happily as John Ames did in Ames or Fred Sharp does in Pomona.

Malcolm seems to have begun his dream of public service while he was a high school student in the city of Pasadena. In any event there was no doubt whatever in his mind when he finished Pomona College shortly after the war as to what he wanted to do. That was to earn an M. A. in Public Administration (which he did the following year at Wayne University in Detroit) and then enter some kind of public service, preferably in the field of local government. After cutting his eye teeth, so to speak, through a year's service with the Bureau of Municipal Research in San Antonio, Texas, he returned to California and served for several years as an executive assistant first to the manager of the city of San Bernardino and then to the manager in

⁵ He would be the first by the way, to insist that what has been told here fails to acknowledge the many contributions made by other civic leaders and officials.

⁶ Several young men from Iran, Brazil and Pakistan who have come to the United States to study American methods of administration have had the opportunity of serving brief apprenticeships with him in recent years, usually through arrangements worked out by the School of Public Administration at the University of Southern California. My hope is that some of India's eager young men are enjoying comparable opportunities elsewhere in the country.

the city of Riverside. It was from this latter beautiful and historic city that he came to Claremont.

At the time of his arrival the community was in the midst of a prolonged and continuing dither over the issue of whether to remain primarily a high-quality residential community or, by changing its planning and zoning ordinances somewhat, to expand the areas zoned for business and light industry and thus hopefully, as the proponents of this latter course argued, "broaden the tax base and reduce the burden on residential property." Thanks to sound instincts reinforced by judicious insight, Mr. Malcolm has managed to "steer clear" of this sometimes inexplicably bitter controversy and, yet remain on friendly terms with all concerned. This has left him free to devote all his energies to the efficient execution of the many policies and measures on which both sides were happily agreed and he has continually used this freedom for the benefit of the whole community.

Park and Trees. Capitalizing on a tradition already well-established when he came, he has been both imaginative and energetic in promoting the purchase of park sites. Thanks to splendid cooperation from the school board, this little city now has not only one of the finest set of parks of any community of its size in the whole country but every park either abuts on the playground of a public school or is adjacent to one. Park and playground thus supplement each other effectively, to the benefit of children, adults, and tax-payers alike.

Malcolm has also pursued this policy of "strengthening that which is good" by putting new vigor into the city's street-tree program. In time the plantings of these past four years will enhance the beauty of the city far beyond their modest charge upon the corporation's budget.

Refuse Collection. There is always resistance to the expansion of governmental services in America, especially when the enlargement is at the expense of private enterprise, and Claremont is a conservative community. All the same they have taken one modest stride in the direction of

"public enterprise" under Mr. Malcolm's management and found it greatly to their liking.

In Claremont as in every modern community the collection and disposal of garbage and rubbish is an essential service. Prior to his appointment the city had a contract with a private firm of scavengers but unfortunately their service was neither cheap nor satisfactory. What Malcolm did was to study the problem from every angle and, having devised a way almost to glamorize such service as well as rationalize it, to recommend that the city do the work itself, covering its costs by monthly service charges varying with the normal volume of trash from each place of residence or business. As a result, and for no more than they paid previously, the residents of Claremont today have the neatest, cleanest service of this kind imaginable.

What it took to make this possible was mainly the purchase of several large but easily-manoeuvrable covered trucks equipped with powerful compressors and the careful training of their crews. The touch of Malcolm's genius came, however, in the form of an insistence that the manufacturer of these superb trucks also design and build a battery-powered, one-man feeder wagon. A most ingenious device, it can be driven right into a back yard to pick up a load of rubbish; then it automatically empties its contents into the "maw" of the truck moving along the street.

Library Expansion. As befits a small college town Claremont has always been proud of its public library, but when Mr. Malcolm arrived the building in which the library was housed, though attractive, had become seriously inadequate. What to do, especially since the city had long since agreed that its library should be operated as a branch of the Los Angeles County Library?

Malcolm's solution was a triumph of administrative imagination. First sounding out the council as to how large an appropriation it would take to induce the county to co-operate, he then persuaded the county to make its payments on building rental and repair several years in advance, this on the understanding that the city would then

appropriate a supplementary amount sufficient to cover the cost of a well-planned expansion of facilities. Such an arrangement appealed to everyone concerned. Result: Claremont punctuated the spring of 1961 by reopening one of the most attractive and serviceable public libraries to be found in any small city in California.

Budgetary Control. Churches, privately-supported colleges and other philanthropic institutions being exempt from taxation in California (as in America generally), some forty percent of all the real and personal property in the college town of Claremont bears no part of the burden of paying the cost of local government. Only by the most economical kind of management therefore is it possible to hold tax rates at levels comparable to those prevailing in surrounding communities.

There are many facts which could be cited to illustrate how Malcolm has risen to this challenge, but two must suffice. In order to hold to a minimum the cost of repairing or replacing street paving, he not only insists on filling minor chuck-holes as soon as they appear but he has persuaded the council to reseal the surface of all the streets in the city every few years so that neither sun nor rain will have a chance to cause unnecessary deterioration.

As a device for keeping city-expenditures under continuous review, he has designed a set of performance charts (they are mounted on the wall behind his desk) showing for each successive month precisely what every department is expected to do (and spend) and how the actual record compares with that anticipated. To him as well as everyone entering his office it serves as an automatic reminder to use both time and money efficiently.

CONCLUSION

What is the secret of the power of men like these to set such impressive examples of the public servant at work? To me it seems to be four-fold. *First*, each one obviously symbolizes by his mode of life that he wants to use his

talents doing things that will be of lasting benefit to his fellow men instead of chasing the almighty dollar. *Second*, each has tried to get all his colleagues to share his vision of how good their agency or community or commonwealth could be if its resources were wisely used. *Third*, each one has always been prepared to let his associates share the glory as well as the work. *Finally*, each has always measured himself not just against the formal requirements of his position but against an ideal standard all his own. In the last analysis it has been the determination to live up to this far higher standard that has made each one tower above the ordinary run of men around him.

It goes without saying, of course, that no official succeeds in becoming a model administrator without showing something of a passion for proficiency, an unyielding determination to get things done. He must also cultivate throughout his organization an unremitting curiosity about better and easier ways to do the task in hand. Let him do these things however—and do them in the spirit of the five men whose records we have analysed—and he will brighten the whole atmosphere around him with the power of his example.

What we need more than anything else in public administration today, all over the world, are thousands upon thousands of men and women setting just such examples. Unfortunately, however, there is no easy way to get them for leaders of this kind can never be commissioned by someone else. They must commission themselves.

3

No Admission for Complaints

ONE OF THE MANY ENGAGING SIGHTS THAT USED to catch my eye last fall, in driving south on Ring Road from the Old Secretariat to attend lectures at the Indian Institute of Public Administration, was that of a small but arresting sign. Conspicuously displayed outside the entrance to a neat commercial establishment, it proclaimed a starkly simple message : "No admission for complaints."

The notice was a puzzling one to say the least. Its spirit was so much at variance with the laudable effort to please their customers made by most Indian businessmen we had met as to be obviously atypical. To travel around the world a bit is to discover that the profit motive works its wonders in much the same mysterious way everywhere. Sooner or later the time will probably come in India, as it already has in America, when, in their feverish quest for customers, some of the more aggressive merchants will even go in their advertising to the extreme of proclaiming that "The customer is always right."

Yet, howsoever this may be, of one thing we can be absolutely certain : the very last thought which any governmental agency should ever entertain in a country claiming to be a democracy is that suggested by the phrase, "No admission for complaints." As Adlai Stevenson once said, self-criticism is democracy's secret weapon. Far from discouraging or suppressing it, the public officials of a free society should rather welcome it. Indeed, when it is informed and disinterested, they might well even pay a

premium for it. For, properly regarded, complaints can be used to superb advantage in the improvement of administration.

THE CITIZEN : LORD OF CREATION

Sooner or later, every political system develops a vocabulary and a style of diction uniquely calculated to suit its own purposes. Once people have become accustomed to a certain usage, however, they sometimes continue to employ it long after it has ceased to be either required or appropriate. To a person who has always lived in a free democratic republic or a republican democracy (why does the obverse sound so strange ?) no status could possibly be higher than that of plain private citizen. It is for him, both in law and in fact, that the state itself exists. He knows this and he never lets his "rulers" forget it. They exist to serve him, not the reverse.

No matter where he may be therefore, supposing only that the country be a democracy, it comes as a rude shock to anyone bred in this tradition to see private citizens referred to, or regarded, as anything less than lords of creation. That an imperial power should attempt to keep its colonial subjects in a state of due submission by fixing in their minds a clear dichotomy between *officials* who give orders and *non-officials* whose function it is to obey them is of course taken for granted. Even an enlightened imperial regime like that of the British had its own selfish purposes to serve.

But what is nothing less than astonishing, if a friend may say so, it is to find occasional vestiges of this colonial usage lingering on in democratic India fifteen years after independence. What the explanation may be is not for an innocent observer from abroad to try to say. Yet one who reads, for example, the literature on the vicissitudes of Panchayati Raj or Community Development can hardly fail to be impressed by the frequency with which the people of India's villages—the citizens of the republic for whom these grand experiments were devised and on whose support

their fate obviously rests—are referred to by the unflattering term—"non-officials," as though they could only be described by what they are *not* !

One is loath to believe that many political and administrative officials in democratic India (thousands of whom played such heroic roles in the struggle for independence) having replaced the lordly British imperialists, are now themselves enamoured of the great deference from the public which their predecessors enjoyed. If they are, however, they would do well to get over it. Or perhaps it would be more to the point to say that the people would do well to disabuse them of such obsolete and inappropriate attachments. For democracy can never bloom or flourish when ordinary citizens stand in undue awe of the officials who are supposed to serve them.

This is by no means to suggest, however, that democracy should ape the artful businessman and adopt the absurd motto, "The citizen is always right." Every member of the body politic should, to be sure, have the right to gripe at the government and criticize its service. Yet this is quite different from saying that his criticism will always be right. All it does is to recognize that, in politics as in gastronomics, the proof of the pudding is in the eating. It is for the citizen, as for the diner in the restaurant or the customer in the market place, to say when he has been well served, not the official who is presumably serving him.

Patently democracy cannot succeed with a spineless citizenry. The best assumption for its officials to operate on therefore is that, whenever or wherever the public service is marred by weakness or corruption, the people not only have a right to complain; they *will* complain—and sooner or later they will find ways of making their complaints effective.

The best solution to the problem of complaints lies naturally in unremitting effort to perfect the processes of public administration, in other words to make every public service dependably efficient and every civil servant habitually courteous. Human fallibility being very hard to circumvent, however, there is much to be said for an agency's

voluntarily setting up and operating a complaint bureau of its own if the scope of its program and the nature of its difficulties warrant recognition of this kind. (It goes without saying that no such bureau would have to be continued indefinitely merely because it was once set up. Should the agency's services improve so much that complaints from the public dwindled to a bare trickle, there is no reason why it should not then be abolished.)

While it lasts, though, there should be no nonsense about its operations. Its staff should be diplomatic and informative in dealing with the citizens wishing to lodge complaints and the agency itself should be uncompromising in dealing with its own employees guilty of delinquencies. No complaint bureau in a democratic government should ever be run in the frivolous spirit of the glib salesman in the department store who, handing a customer a holiday purchase, says with toothy smile, "I'm sure you'll be very happy with this merchandise—and here is your exchange slip when you want to bring it back."

FOUR SIMPLE SAFEGUARDS

Apart from what an administrative agency does wholly on its own by way of coping promptly with a citizen's complaints, three or four simple remedies are ordinarily available to the public in every democracy worthy of the name. To begin with, an aggrieved individual can always write a letter to the editor of his favorite newspaper or magazine. This may not seem like very forceful action, yet, if the blast be well-conceived and phrased, it will often be the most effective thing a man can do to insure speedy rectification or improvement.

Incidentally, the "Letters" columns in the leading Indian papers seem to me to reflect great credit on the people of this country. They bespeak a grand tradition of constructive criticism. Some of the communications submitted to the editors in New Delhi this past year have been little short of classic. Many breathe something of the spirit of that stalwart British aristocrat who found himself

entangled with, or, as he claimed, entrapped by the traffic police of a small town in the American Midwest some years ago. After having exhausted all his other devices in trying to escape the threatened fine he played his trump card: "Let me go, you blackguards, or I'll write a letter to the editor of the *Times*!"

Another safeguard the citizen invariably has in dealing with careless or callous officials is to threaten to "see my M.P.," to "tell my M.L.A.," or, as Americans say, to "write my Congressman." This is always permissible of course but is by no means to be recommended in every case. It is hard to generalize on this score but my guess is that the normal tendency is for legislators to do too much probing into the details of administration rather than too little. Hence they should not be pressed in this regard lest they overdo it. Fortunately most politicians learn after a little seasoning when to inquire into a complaint and when simply to file it away.

The third of these common safeguards consists of a formal or informal legislative investigation into the service complained of. This falls well within the scope of regular procedure but is so formidable a matter as to be impractical for dealing with other than a long train of blunders or abuses or something like a general epidemic of inefficiency and corruption. The same is true of the idea of creating a special commission of inquiry and charging it with making an investigation. This kind of device can be used to good advantage on occasion but it is quite unsuited for getting prompt adjustments or correctives for the ordinary run of grievances by which the public services are bedeviled.

The fourth and last of these ordinary safeguards against inefficiency or corruption in public administration, though rather less common, is nevertheless very simple. It is that of requiring every office or officer to have available at all times an official complaint book and to present it on demand whenever any person desires to criticize some aspect of the service he has gotten or perhaps failed to get, this on the assumption that such books will be checked by supervisory officials at frequent intervals and corrective action promptly taken.

The requirement of keeping formal complaint books of this kind may be imposed either through legislative action or by higher administrative authority and theoretically it would seem to offer a well-nigh perfect solution to the problem. Yet no technical procedure of this type is ever quite automatic nor is it likely to be fool-proof. What, for example, if the official, when asked to produce his complaint book, refuses to do so, or pretends it has been mislaid? Pressed by a multitude of other concerns, the citizen may simply give up and thus lose out on the chance to record his grievance. Or what if the supervisory official accepts from the employee a specious explanation of what went wrong or, alternatively, discovers what the difficulty really was but still does nothing either to make amends to the complainant or, what is perhaps more to the point, to prevent its recurrence? In either case, the scheme simply breaks down.

SWEDEN'S "INDEPENDENT INVESTIGATOR"

In the by-gone days of the police state when the functions of government were few, probably it did not matter much whether processes for the settlement of grievances were easily available or not. In American parlance a man could easily speak to his city councilman, his county supervisor, his ward leader, his state assembly man or his congressman and generally "get things fixed."

When the police state gave way, however, to that we may call the service state, the problem of the citizen aggrieved by the faults of government employees naturally became more complicated. The functions of government had doubled or tripled and potentialities for mistakes and misunderstanding, not to mention malfeasance, had increased accordingly. Even so the politicians, aided as they began to be by "field representatives," were still able in most cases to play the role of middlemen or mediators and work out acceptable adjustments.

Today, however, alike in India and the United States, not to mention many other countries in the world, the

service state has begun to give way to the welfare state and the contacts between public administration and the individual member of the body politic have multiplied again. Day in and day out the citizen finds himself depending on a veritable host of civil servants for services not only essential to his family's comfort and pleasure but in many cases vital to their health and safety as well. What to do if they fail to do their duty or botch their work and the agency itself declines to make amends?

Obviously the citizen may still write a letter to his newspaper. He may still approach his old friend, the party leader or political representative for help and, of course, he can avail himself, should there be one available, of the services of the agency's bureau of complaint. But what if none of these proves to be sufficient? What then? Perhaps he should urge his government to borrow from Scandinavian experience and create an independent office specifically charged with making sure that his grievances are investigated and adjusted.

Judging by Swedish, Finnish and Danish satisfaction with this device, one method every democracy ought to explore is that of appointing a special high-level official whose particular and primary duty it would be to receive complaints regarding the public services, to investigate them promptly, and then make open recommendations for changes or adjustments, should these be in order. Sweden first experimented with such a device during her so-called Era of Liberty in the 18th century but its real development as an institution dates from its revival in 1809 following the forced abdication of King Gustav Adolf IV. Since then it has not only been used continuously but expanded, through bifurcation, to cover military as well as civilian services.

CIVIL AND MILITARY OMBUDSMEN

This investigatory official is known in Sweden (and Denmark) as an Ombudsman, meaning literally a "receiver of petitions" or "a man who handles petitions." There is

a Judicial Ombudsman, or JO as the Swedes call him, who is what might be termed a Commissioner for Civil Affairs and, since 1918, a Military Ombudsman, or MO, who functions similarly in the field of Military Affairs. Professor Elis Hastad describes them in his book *The Parliament of Sweden*, as providing "a curious but important link" in the machinery which the Riksdag has evolved for supervising Swedish public administration.¹

Initially the same official investigated complaints pertaining to the military as well as the civilian services, but when the period of conscription was lengthened to a year or more under the Army Organisation Act of 1914, a separate Military Ombudsman was appointed to insure that the rights of conscripts would be fully respected and observed. It should be noted in passing that the Government has its own administrative supervisor in the person of the Attorney General.

These Ombudsmen, Commissioners or Procurators, as they are variously called, go about their duties in several ways according to Hastad. Most of their work arises from complaints made by ordinary citizens that their rights have in some way been infringed upon or that they have been victimised by actions *ultra vires* on the part of various officials or agencies. But the Ombudsmen are also expected, within limits, to undertake tours of inspection, attend meetings of administrative bodies and follow the reports of public affairs in the press in order to discover when and where it might be useful for them to intervene.

Whatever the source of the complaint, however, they are obliged to investigate every one. When an offence is found to be neither serious nor premeditated the person at fault may simply be given a reprimand, but an Ombudsman has the option, if he wishes to go that far, of prosecuting offenders in the courts. Only a relatively few grievances call for positive action (which is, of course, exactly what one would expect in a country of such general enlightenment as Sweden) ; most of them are "simply written off."

All the reports prepared by the Ombudsmen have the

¹ The account which follows is based wholly on Dr. Hastad's analysis.

status of public documents and are available both to the press and to all interested citizens. Their work therefore is done "in the full light of publicity." They are also expected to submit annual reports to Parliament (these are printed and have become quite voluminous) and, when expedient, to draft recommendations for improving both the substance and the administration of the laws. These latter formerly went to the Riksdag alone but nowadays they are usually sent directly to the Ministry concerned and simply summarized in the report to Parliament.

Since 1941 the Ombudsmen have been elected by the Riksdag, in each case for four year terms. They are eligible for re-election and are often kept on for a second and even a third term. It is generally agreed, however, that the office is not one which should be held for life and that service for ten or twelve years is "about the optimum for effective supervision." On the other hand, if the Parliament loses confidence in an Ombudsman it may dismiss him before his term expires or refuse to re-elect him, which latter has happened several times.

Until recently the Ombudsman for Civil Affairs was limited in the sphere of his work to the services of the central or national administration. However, in 1956 the Riksdag decided that he should also be responsible for investigating certain types of complaints pertaining to the sphere of local government.

With respect to national administrative services Ombudsmen have so far always abstained from trying to check on the Government itself, which is to say on the members of the Cabinet. Being elected, as he is, on a non-partisan basis, it has seemed the part of wisdom to avoid the kind of controversy—and the possible loss of prestige—which might result from criticizing the top leadership of the country. Moreover the Instrument of Government has established a special Committee on the Constitution for this purpose.

FINEST FEATURE ?

On the whole, according to Hastad, the Ombudsmen have

"won considerable prestige both within the administration and with members of the general public anxious for the redress of grievances. Many regard them as the finest feature of the constitution." Recently proposals were made for creating separate Ombudsmen for the medical and social welfare services. However, the Riksdag has taken the view that the wiser course would be not to establish any additional offices but to authorize the Commissioner of Civil Affairs, as he might be called, to enlarge his own staff for this purpose recruiting such specialists as may be necessary.

The only serious complaint that seems to have been lodged against the Ombudsmen, who are of course lawyers themselves, is that they have concentrated too much on the judicial system at the expense of completely adequate supervision of civilian administration. Generally such criticism is easily understandable because in the modern regulatory welfare state, public administration has assumed, in Hastad's words, "a significance hitherto unparalleled in the progress of the ordinary citizen from the cradle to the grave."

Sweden has another important supervisory institution for national public administration in a body of twelve Parliamentary Auditors. These officials are designated annually to investigate and report upon "the efficiency of administrative operations," not of the Government as such, but of the administrative agencies under its control. They do not perform technical audits for these are handled initially by the agencies themselves and, at the highest level, by the Public Accounts Office or some other specifically designated body. But they do examine the overall records of many agencies.

After an agency whose operations have been criticized has had a chance to explain or defend itself, the auditor's report, which is printed together with the agency's rejoinder, is considered both by the Riksdag's Committee on Supply (which deals with public expenditures generally) and, subsequently, by both Houses of Parliament. Faults and weaknesses may then be cited by the Riksdag in a statement to the Government and, if rectification is requested, the

Government is obliged to report what it has done in the matter whenever the Riksdag convenes for its next meeting.

THE DANISH OMBUDSMAN

Impressed by Swedish success with this kind of an independent official, Finland chose to create a similar office to insure the integrity of her system of administration when she became independent following the first World War. So, more recently, has Denmark. When the Danes adopted their present constitution in 1953, they stipulated, among other things, that the Folkething or Parliament should "elect one or two persons not members of Parliament to supervise civil and military Government administration."²

Duties of Ombudsman. Under the statute subsequently adopted to establish the office, the Ombudsman or Commissioner—only one has been elected to date—is charged with seeing to it that no Minister or civil servant fails in the performance of his duty either through malfeasance or neglect. His instructions are to make sure "that no person within the scope of his activities pursues unlawful objectives, makes arbitrary and unreasonable decisions, or is in any way guilty of mistake or negligence in the performance of his duties." For the present at least, his jurisdiction is limited to what the Danes call state, meaning national, administration. He has no authority to investigate complaints either in the field of local government or that of the courts.

The Danish Commissioner, who has his office in the Parliament building, may investigate a branch of the public service either on the basis of a complaint or on his own initiative. He may examine the working of any establishment within the executive branch of the government and every official is obliged to provide him with whatever

² The following account is based on an article "Public Trust in Government Services" by Professor Stephan Hurwitz, Denmark's first Ombudsman, published in the Danish Foreign Office Journal, August 1956, pp. 11-15.

information or records he needs to get to the bottom of the complaint being investigated. He may even summon witnesses to give testimony in court should that be essential to ascertaining the pertinent facts.

If the Ombudsman finds that a Minister should be asked to justify his actions, a recommendation to that effect is laid before the Parliament. When he suspects that an official has committed a criminal offence, he may ask the public prosecutor to bring suit against the offender in the regular courts. Should he decide that an employee's conduct calls for disciplinary action, he may direct the man's superiors to administer it.

Seldom in previous Danish history had civil servants been held responsible under the penal code for unintentional errors in the performance of their duties and it was not the intention of the new constitution to alter this practice.

The main benefits to the public stemming from the establishment of the office derive rather more therefore from the ability of the Commissioner, through constructive use of his powers, to prevent the repetition of error altogether, once a weak spot or "sour" situation has been uncovered, than from any authority he has to compel an agency to make amends for such faults.

The Ombudsman may review the operations of any branch of administration and recommend changes either in general procedure or with respect to particular points which have given rise to criticism. Since he may, under the statute, always "give his opinion on a complaint to the person complained of" even when no specification is called for, he is able to exercise what Professor Hurwitz, the first and present Ombudsman, calls "a guiding influence" on most administrative agencies.

This gives him a firm legal basis for initiating discussions with the head of an agency whenever his notice has been directed to any aspect of its work seeming to call for correction. The arrangement has proven to be an admirable one. It has led in many cases to the prompt and amicable adjustment of irritations which might otherwise have bedeviled the public indefinitely.

Another happy feature of the Danish Commissioner's status has to do with his relations with Parliament. He may submit separate recommendations on individual problems at any time, in addition to presenting his annual report and having it printed and published. It is understood of course that the only kinds of complaint or criticism which he investigates are those pertaining to administration per se. The Ombudsman is "independent of Parliament," to be sure, but this does not mean that he is free to investigate and correct defects of policy as well as flaws and failures in administration.

To expedite its own contacts with the Commissioner, the Folkething has created a special committee chaired by its Speaker. This has insured excellent liaison between the two and has contributed considerably to the ability of the Ombudsman to be effective without badgering the Folkething for a large staff. As in Sweden and Finland, the Commissioner has kept his office small. Besides himself the whole staff consists of but three or four legal aides and four or five stenographic secretaries and clerks.

Any person finding "something rotten in the state of Denmark" may ask the Ombudsman to investigate the matter, but the complaint must always be in writing and must bear the signature of the person making it. It must also be made reasonably soon after the occurrence of the error complained of, for matters over a year old can seldom be followed up. The Commissioner alone decides whether a criticism is worth pursuing but as a matter of practice every complaint "not obviously pointless" is investigated.

The first step is always to ask the employee or agency concerned to supply the pertinent records and make whatever rejoinder they wish. "Getting the facts" is naturally basic for all concerned. Beyond this however the Danish act protects civil servants against whom complaints are launched by insisting that they be given the right to defend themselves and have their own testimony included in whatever report the Commissioner makes. They may even demand that an investigation in which they are involved

be transferred from his office to an ordinary civil service tribunal, though none seems to have done so thus far.

First Year's Experience. Most of the Ombudsman's work stems, as one would expect it to, from complaints submitted by private citizens aggrieved over what they regard as some flaw in the public service. Denmark has a population of about four million people and during the first year the office was in operation between 700 and 800 complaints were received. They touched practically every major agency of government and came not only from every section of society but also from every part of the country.

Of the total, about 40 per cent were discarded immediately because of falling outside the jurisdiction of the office—though wherever possible the party was advised as to where he might more properly direct his complaint. As for the remaining 60 per cent they were all investigated and in each case the complaint was given an answer, even if it amounted to no more than saying that his complaint was found to be without merit.

Indeed, the standards of public service in Denmark being what they are, most of the grievances investigated did prove to be unfounded in the sense that no basis existed for censuring either the employee or the agency for which he worked. This does not mean however that such complaints consisted merely of cantankerous quibbling. In most instances the reason for making the criticism lay either in honest ignorance regarding the regulations being enforced or in what the Commissioner termed "inexperience of administrative affairs." Nor does it mean that the time spent upon such imaginary grievances was wasted. The reports received by the complainant often performed a valuable educational service by disabusing him of the idea that he had been the victim of a heartless or negligent bureaucracy.

In a clear 10 per cent of the total number of cases however, the complaint, to quote the Ombudsman, "achieved a positive result" and this without cost or fee of any kind. The investigation ended either in an administrative adjust-

ment that was to his advantage or, at the minimum, in an admission that the complaint was warranted. It may be mentioned parenthetically with reference to this latter point, that some fears had been expressed, when the new institution was first proposed, to the effect that it would perhaps victimize "the minor civil servant who might fail to follow his instructions to the letter but who acted with judgment and proper discretion." So far this danger has never materialized nor is it likely to as long as the Ombudsman avoids, as he has up to now, a largely formalistic approach.

Two recent cases reported by the Commissioner are especially interesting. One had to do with a school teacher who complained of being harassed by his superiors because, although complying faithfully with the obligation to give religious instruction during school hours—the Lutheran Church is the state church in Denmark—he insisted on his right, as a private citizen, to profess atheism after school was out. The other involved the Rector of a University who was accused of favoring a relative for a position for which the applicant lacked the necessary qualifications. What happened in the former case is not reported but in the latter the Ombudsman recommended the adoption of a rule prohibiting any official from making or participating in any decision involving the promotion of a relative.

Having been established in Denmark less than ten years ago, the institution of Ombudsman is still rather new. Because of its fine beginning, however (and the record of how solidly it has established itself in Sweden and Finland), the prospect is that it will become in due course "an integral part of Danish democracy."

A PARLIAMENTARY COMMISSIONER FOR BRITAIN?

Within the past year or two both Britain and New Zealand have begun to consider the establishment of similar offices. Perhaps because they too have gone so far in democratic socialism as to make efficient public service indispensable to private well-being, each nation is apparently

determined to try to make its civil servants more responsive than they are at present to the preferences and criticisms of the ordinary citizen. At any rate, neither seems to be satisfied with the quality or sensitivity of its administrative services as they operate today.

Under the plan being considered in New Zealand the Ombudsman would be called the Parliamentary Commissioner for Investigations and be appointed by the Governor-General on the recommendation of the Parliament. Initially he would investigate a citizen's grievances quietly and report in private to the Minister concerned. Should the Minister fail within a given period to accept the recommendation offered, the Commissioner would then report publicly to the Prime Minister and Parliament. That would be the end of the matter insofar as his special office was concerned. He would have no power to order a settlement himself.

In Britain those who are urging the creation of such an officer are proposing that he be called simply the Parliamentary Commissioner, that he be independent of the Executive with a status comparable to that of the Comptroller and Auditor General, and that he be removable only by an address from both Lords and Commons. The lead is being taken by an all-party or non-partisan organization of lawyers called "Justice," which functions as the British section of the International Commission of Jurists and has just sponsored a report on *The Citizen and Administration* edited by Sir John Whyatt, former Chief Justice of Singapore. Lord Shawcross, Chairman of the organization, has suggested in a preface that Whyatt's report could well be used to draw up a Charter for the rights of the little man who, in his words, "has become too used to being pushed around."³

Even in a country with high standards of administration there are occasions when error or procrastination can cause injustice and it is important, as Shawcross observes, that they be not disregarded. "The man of substance can deal

³ See "Notes of the Week" and A. M. Abraham's "London Letter" in *Thought* (New Delhi), November 11, 1961, pp. 2-3 and 16-17 respectively.

with these situations, because he is near to the Establishment, he enjoys the status or possesses the influence which will insure him the ear of those in authority. He can afford to pursue such legal remedies as may be available. He knows his way around. But too often the little man, the ordinary humble citizen, is incapable of asserting himself."

Whether either of these efforts in the Commonwealth will bear fruit remains to be seen. What is only too clear however is that every government with a conscience needs to find a "good" solution to the problem of justifiable complaints.

CONCLUSION

Whether Indian democracy would benefit from the creation of such an office, either in the various states or at the Centre, is of course for Indians to decide. Preoccupation with minor complaints and grievances might conceivably "hamper administration," as the editors of *Thought* have observed, and might "undermine the morale of the bureaucracy" at the very time when its burdens are increasing. Yet India, obviously, has more "little people" than any other democracy in the world and their faith in democratic government can be sustained only if their complaints and grievances regarding the public services are treated with respect and sympathy.

No such officer as that of Ombudsman has yet been created in the American governmental system at either the national or state level. "Pitiless publicity" meted out by the press and by radio and television reporters has thus far served quite well to keep both federal and state administrators alert to public needs and responsive to the "gripes" and complaints of individual citizens. In addition there has been an enormous emphasis in government as well as business on the importance of maintaining "good public relations." Yet the establishment by Congress of an independent Comptroller-General and the creation by some states, such as California, of an independent Auditor-General, offer good precedents to build on should the need for federal

NO ADMISSION FOR COMPLAINTS

or state "commissioners of investigation" ever become urgent.

On the level of local government, New York City is, to the best of my knowledge, the only municipality which has done any real pioneering in this field. For several decades it has had a separate and special Department of Investigation, endowed with considerable autonomy, which had contributed significantly to quickening administrative integrity throughout that vast metropolis.

Let me return in closing to first principles. The best assurance of good public service—of competent civil servants ever on their toes to serve the public—is a body of citizens who, willing and able to provide fair compensation and good working conditions for their employees, then insist on good service in return. Given these conditions, there would seldom be any complaints, even though a special office were established to receive them.

Finally lest any Delhiwalla be troubled in his sleep because of that strange sign which furnished the title for this lecture, there is a sequel to report. We looked for it again this afternoon as we drove down to the Institute and discovered that for the past six months the wording has been incomplete. The sign now reads :⁴

NO ADMISSION
RING x x x
FOR COMPLAINTS.

⁴ The actual number is purposely omitted here.

4

The Emergence of Universal Standards

TO HAVE READ EVEN A PORTION OF THE growing body of literature on comparative public administration available in any reasonable well-stocked university library today is to realize that a great new chapter in the history of public management opened with the return of peace following World War II.

Thanks particularly to the spreading of the ideals of freedom and democracy but also partly to a vast increase in the exchange of books and periodicals, to the development of many bi-lateral and United Nations programs for the exchange of professional and technical personnel, to the establishment in dozens of countries of institutes of public administration (of which the Indian Institute is a notable example) and finally to the vast expansion of the tourist business in so many countries of the world, the days when the standards of public administration in any given nation were judged solely by the yard stick of its own culture, which is to say of its own previously attained standards, are fast disappearing. In a few more decades they will be gone forever.

The postwar period has seen at least the clear beginning of a new age—that of universal standards. These have by no means crystallized as yet and it will obviously be many decades before they prevail effectively in every country and on every continent. But there can be no doubt about their gradual emergence. The day is coming—indeed it is already dawning—when no nation will be able to “play in

the big league," so to speak, unless its public services and amenities measure up favorably on the scale of universal standards. It simply will not be taken seriously either by people of other countries, by other members in the family of nations, or, what in some ways is even worse, by the more forward-looking among its own citizens.

INDICES OF POLITICAL PROGRESS

Though there are many superficial differences between the cultures of East and West, North and South, there are few, if any, fundamental differences in value systems among peoples who have caught the grand vision of freedom, equality and brotherhood. There may be certain differences which for a time *seem* to be fundamental in character but these will usually be due to the fact that one society is modern (by virtue of the higher educational level of its people and the more advanced state of its technology) while the other is traditional (meaning somewhat feudal in social structure and backward in technology).

Yet as the people in a traditional society come to know how democracy operates and what modern techniques of production and exchange make possible, a consensus begins to develop. Thus, no matter where they live, people are more and more coming to expect the same kind and quality of public facilities and services. They may go on making allowances for backward or underdeveloped or developing or growth countries for a while—as indeed they should—but this is the age of the revolution of rising expectations in more ways than one. When such countries are given a fair chance to forge ahead through economic aid and technical assistance, they are also expected to "deliver the goods", not only in the market place but in all the major fields of public administration as well.

This is not to say however that mankind faces the prospect of the emergence of any single, neat, automatic standard of measurement or judgment. Modern government is a big and complicated business and only a multiple yardstick

will ever be adequate for a comprehensive appraisal of its performance.

Our main concern here is naturally with standards of governmental administration yet, unless these are to be abstracted from their context and conceived wholly in mechanical terms, they cannot be separated from the standards of public policy which it is their function to subserve. Indeed it seems to me that, for a systematic approach to this whole problem, one must think in terms of four dimensions, some of which occasionally overlap.

First, logically, are the standards pertaining to the *processes* by which policy is made at the higher levels, especially the level of legislative or statutory action. *Second* come standards relating to the *substance* of public policy, which is to say the content of laws or statutes. *Third*, come those pertaining to the *processes* of administration and *fourth*, those relating to the *substance* of administration, or in other words the actual services and facilities provided to the public for its use.

Taken altogether these would add up to a set of indices of political progress. Needless to say there is no way by which the millennium of perfection over this vast range could be reached in one great leap, whether of five years, twenty or even fifty. With respect to problems involving social relations even more than those pertaining to material advancement, incrementalism is the only sound way to move ahead. It alone will yield lasting progress.

The only kind of a utopia we humans can reasonably expect to achieve is a utopia in which we are at liberty to strive for the building of a society unmarred by want or discord, not one in which perfect abundance and harmony have been attained. What matters is having the chance, under not too unfavorable conditions, to engage in the *pursuit* of happiness. Any one who expects from society a flat guarantee of happiness can only be pitied, for he is a fool.

THE POLITICAL PROCESSES

Good government begins logically and in practice with

good politics, and at least in a democracy, good politics begins with a fair and workable political process that is representative in character. It is clear from the set-backs and second starts which many of the would-be democracies in this region of the world have experienced in recent years that it is one thing to draft a scheme of responsible popular government and another and more difficult thing to make it work. (India's example shines like a beacon all over South and South-East Asia.) But this does not make it any the less important to understand what the essentials of democratic procedure are with respect to the making of basic policy.

Briefly stated these requirements are :

1. Liberty through law. The highest political authorities must think and act in terms of being limited by a constitution. While they may, and usually must, have taken the leadership in the drafting of this "supreme law of the land," it is essential that it be ratified by the people for this is the only way by which it can really become theirs and acquire a truly binding character.

2. Freedom of thought and expression. Democracy contemplates rational control. It must therefore begin with freedom of the mind. Men must be free to worship as they please (though not in the name of religion to try to fix the philosophy or freeze the customs of society as a whole) and also to think, speak, write, publish, and broadcast as they please. Some outer limits will of course be justified but only in periods of immediate and serious danger. Otherwise the presumption must be that individuals will exercise these most fundamental of all freedoms without abusing them. Indeed democracy amounts to betting that the people will ordinarily use their liberties responsibly and it is willing to run certain risks accordingly.

3. Free political organization and activity. Another basic test of due political procedure is whether citizens are free to associate and organize for the promotion of their civic ideas and interests. Every person should be free to join or not to join a political party and likewise to help or abstain in the functioning of what we Americans call pressure groups.

The seal of genuine freedom in this regard—and hence the standard to be honored—is that all parties and pressure groups shall be presumed to be loyal to the regime. For any decision to the contrary, the burden of proof must be on the party in power, which is to say on the government, not on the private citizen or group under suspicion.

4. Fair representation. The allocation of seats and votes in political assemblies and councils must accord to the people of all section and classes the opportunity to win representations as nearly as may be in proportion to their number. The right to vote should be guaranteed to all adults subject only to a minimal residential and perhaps also a literacy requirement.

THE SUBSTANCE OF POLICY

At first flush it might seem futile to try to formulate objective standards pertaining to the substance of policy for in a democracy the only proper test of what the state should do inevitably comes down to the proposition that policy should be designed to meet the "felt needs" of the people as reflected in public opinion and as expressed in their voting at the polls. Yet on reflection the problem becomes quite manageable. With human nature being what it is and with human experience providing light and guidance, it is possible to say quite a few things about standards policy in modern societies claiming to have an atmosphere of freedom and enlightenment.

The National Interest: Most of these standards, and certainly the more objective ones, pertain to internal matters, but let us deal first with the one that pertains to external relations. This is the standard of what might be called the national interest. As long as the age of nationalism continues—and after nearly five centuries one must admit that it shows very few signs of abating—there can be no question whatever but that the first standard of public policy must be that of national security or survival. It is understood and accepted everywhere that every nation is

vouchsafed the right to insure by any reasonable means its own self-preservation. But by the same token it is also generally agreed that no country is entitled in the name of protecting its own national interests, to violate the political independence or territorial integrity of any other nation. Here as elsewhere it is expected that the rule of reason will be observed. The right to use force or compulsion is justifiable only in so far as they are required to insure respect for a nation's rights. In all other matters a nation is expected to practise the politics of attraction.

The Public Interest. In his provocative study entitled *The Vocabulary of Politics*, T. D. Weldon argues cogently and persuasively that many of the most high-sounding and prestigious terms used in the discussion of things political are valuable, not because they have an exact, objectively verifiable meaning but precisely because they do *not* lend themselves to explicit definition. One of the best possible illustrations of this fact—for fact it is—lies in the record of the term “the public interest.” Wherever men discuss legislation or administration especially in the West, sooner or later, and usually sooner than later, everyone tends to justify his votes or actions by insisting that they are prompted by faithful and intelligent devotion to the public interest.

The utility of the phrase lies in the fact that, though people may urge different things or vote in different ways, they admit, by claiming to act in the public interest, that they subscribe to the same standard regarding what ought to be the substance of official policy. If the standard proves a bit hard to define specifically in a given case (and admittedly this often happens) there is at least considerable advantage in having the argument revolve around the exact meaning of an ideal which is commonly accepted rather than over the merits of two quite different standards. Thus the term is certain to go on being used in appraising the merits of state policy even though some scholars and critics have urged that it be discarded as being either devoid of value or actually confusing and harmful.

To say this however is not to argue that the greater the ambivalence in such a term the better. As a matter of fact the less uncertainty there can be about its meaning the better, for it will then be easier to reach agreement. There need be no worrying that through elimination of the last degree of vagueness the value of the phrase will be destroyed. In the nature of things this could never happen.

For this reason it is worth while to give the most serious kind of consideration to the distinction which Professor David Braybrooke of Yale University makes between what he has called the inflated and deflated patterns of meaning which may be associated with the term "public interest."¹ The former or inflated usage sacrifices a great deal of the potential value of the phrase by tending to become so broad and loose as to become a short title for the whole grand cluster values in the system of beliefs and techniques by which the people of the society live—i.e. humanity, justice, liberty, equality, fraternity, welfare, cultural refinement and all the rest. In such a context to apply the standard of the public interest can amount to no more than aiming for what might be called the Paretian optimum with regard to every value in the cluster simultaneously.

Though there are several other possible conceptions of the inflated pattern—or at least alternative ways of describing it—none of them is notably more serviceable. Thus for example the public interest might be held to correspond to "the vital needs of the whole population." Or it might be said to mean the general welfare or the greatest good (or greatest happiness) of the greatest number. Or, recognizing the importance of the time factor and the danger of underestimating future utilities' serving the public interest might be held to consist of doing now all the things people would wish to have done when they have had the benefit of five or ten years' hindsight.

Each of these definitions suffers almost equally from

¹ In a paper entitled "The Future of the Public Interest" prepared for the joint meeting in New York, September 10, 1960 of the American Political Science Association and the American Society for Political and Legal Philosophy.

including too much, from trying to incorporate too many values in what purports to be a single yardstick. And the same is true of one other conception of the term which deserves to be mentioned. Professor Arthur N. Holcombe of Harvard University contended some years ago in an address at Claremont University College that to legislate or regulate in the public interest is to strive for solutions that combine what rational analysis of the given problem situation would seem to dictate with respect for the customs and traditions to which people have become attached. This is surely a counsel of wisdom, for every society would undoubtedly appreciate a state which endeavored in its governance to heed the claims of the past as well as the lure of a future capitalizing on the latest advances in science and technology. But it hardly makes the standard an easy one to apply.

In the hope of making "the public interest" a clearer and consequently more usable standard of the proper content of public policy, Braybrooke therefore suggests the advisability of employing the deflated pattern of the term. To understand its character however one must first understand its limitations. It is usable only when these three pre-conditions exist: (1) a relatively small group of people having special interests are arrayed against the public which is to say the open body politic from which the members of the group have separated themselves on the issue of the moment but to which they will return as other issues arise, (2) the responsibility for action or for declining to act rests exclusively with the government, (3) the issue is approachable as a domestic matter even though formally it relates to foreign affairs.

Bearing these three limitations in mind, the deflated or narrower definition of the public interest comes down to a spectrum or range of considerations arrayed in decreasing order of importance. The stable or fixed end of the spectrum begins with concern for those things essential for life itself—food, clothing and shelter. Until these needs are met sufficiently well to insure survival of the population, they must have first claim upon the attention of those res-

possible for the making of policy. Under such conditions to judge a proposed statute or activity or appropriation by the standard of the public interest, is to ask how much it would contribute, in comparison with alternative courses of policy, toward feeding the hungry (including assurance of an adequate supply of potable water), clothing the naked, or sheltering the homeless.

Once these needs have come to be largely satisfied, as happily they have in most countries, the spectrum begins to expand and the public interest comes to include, in successive order, consideration for environmental sanitation and primary medical care ; for minimal educational facilities ; for basic utilities such as transport, communications and power ; and—illustrative of the growing end of the spectrum in the more advanced countries today—for recreation facilities and services. Where it goes beyond this point is hard to say, though the need for conserving irreplaceable natural resources would clearly have to be included along with the establishment of outdoor recreational facilities unless it had already been recognized or included at an earlier stage.

Another component of the public interest in this deflated sense of the term might however be a concern over inequality of income. Indeed, considering the strong emphasis invariably given to the ideal of equality in democratic philosophy, some insistence on reducing inequalities of income would almost certainly have to be incorporated into the standard. Yet there should be little, nay, no warrant for going very far in this direction. Equality of opportunity is the important thing. Once the lowest economic stratum of society has been enabled to lift itself up to the level of what the British Fabians used to call "a decent minimum," what the public interest calls for in a democracy is the devotion of more resources to enlarging and equalizing educational opportunities rather than any further levelling of incomes. But let no one miss the qualifying clause. This much equality is expected. This standard has already emerged among all enlightened nations. No country can hope to enjoy the respect of the growing family of democratic nations, to say

nothing of their sympathy, whose government looks idly and indifferently at the shameful spectacle of glittering wealth and groveling poverty existing side by side within the social order.

In any event however there must come a point in any free society beyond which it could not fairly be argued that the public interest, in this deflated and more useful sense of the term, calls insistently for further action. It may be both possible and advisable in a society of great affluence, such as Ambassador John Kenneth Galbraith has described, for the State to expand its services considerably beyond those included in the spectrum just delineated. But even so those who favor such expansion would be on sounder ground if they rested such advocacy on the merits of the philosophy of the welfare state or on the benefits accruing to society from state-aided cultural growth and refinement rather than on the ground that the public interest demands it.

To commend thus the analysis of this elusive concept made by Professor Braybrooke is not however say that he has said the last word of this subject. Indeed Professor Glendon Schubert of Michigan State University presented another paper on this problem at that same meeting in which, after doing his best to clarify the various usages of the term to be found in contemporary literature on public affairs, he almost came to the conclusion that "there is no way of defining it that would invest it with operational sense."

Under the title "Is there a Public Interest?" Schubert shows how most writers or analysts who employ the concept fall into one or the other of these three major groups: rationalists, idealists or realists. The rationalists are those who, believing in the ability of the people to discern their own true interests and in the general honesty of the efforts made by political parties to promote the public interest, are convinced that what issues from the political process will normally be in the public interest provided only that pressure groups are not allowed to corrupt the functioning of democratic institutions. They tend generally however to assume that pressure groups are more easily "kept in

their place" under the British form of democracy than under the American.

The idealists believe there is such a thing as an ascertainable public interest and that—given a fair chance to express themselves at the ballot box on the essence of an issue as distinguished from its technicalities—the people can be depended upon to support it. What distinguishes them from the rationalists is that they look with jaundiced eye at the parties as well as the pressure groups. Among themselves however they range from Platonists to advocates of stewardship or trusteeship and what Schubert calls administrative engineers, guild idealists, scientific idealists, and proponents of sociological jurisprudence—distinctions which to say the least it is not the easiest thing in the world to follow.

As for the realists they take life as they find it and seem to assume that the best of all possible worlds is a world in which pressure groups along with political parties and individual citizens, are given a fair chance to work for what they claim to be in the public interest. Let the competition be fair and open, they say, and whatever emerges from the clash and conflict among the various contestants will be as close an approximation to what the public interest calls for as can reasonably be expected.

Schubert then proceeds to sub-classify the theorists in this third group into (a) Bentlian realists (after A.F. Bentley, author of *The Process of Government*) who take an almost mechanistic view of the problem, (b) psychological realists, who put their faith in the compulsion resting alike on political representatives, administrators and judges to resolve the conflicts of interest in their own minds before reaching their official decisions, and (c) "the due process—equilibrium" realists who, sharing the ethical relativism of their fellow realists' nevertheless rest their case ultimately on a crude theory of mathematical probability. What it amounts to is this: they believe decisions affecting public policy are most likely to be accepted by the public and to help maintain the social equilibrium when the process by which they have been arrived at is one that gives every

interest, whether avowedly public or not, a full opportunity to be heard.

Does all this help—or has the problem of defining standards with regard to the substance of policy become more baffling than ever? Professor Schubert concludes by saying that “if the concept of the public interest makes no operational sense, notwithstanding the efforts of a generation of capable scholars, then political scientists might better spend their time maturing concepts that offer greater promise of becoming useful tools in the scientific study of political responsibility.” My own inclination is to retain the term recognizing with Weldon that some concepts serve a very useful purpose by not being absolutely precise in their meaning but also adopting Braybrooke’s suggestion regarding the superiority of the deflated pattern.

ADMINISTRATIVE PROCESSES AND PERSONNEL

Turning next to standards bearing on administrative processes and personnel, the general expectation which is coming to prevail is that government employees, the bureaucracy or civil service—use whatever term you will—should exhibit not a dull and deadening impartiality toward parties and programs but what might be called a spirit of “constructive neutrality.” Political leadership is hard to come by and, the crudities and brutalities of campaigning being what they all too often are, it is too much to expect that those who have braved the slings and arrows of outrageous opposition in order to work for programmatic changes of a kind they earnestly believe the times demand either will or should be content to see their good, hard work sabotaged by civil servants in the name of nonpartisan impartiality.

To state the point another way, what is expected of the civil service as its working philosophy is loyal acceptance of the logic of the political system: that those who have been told by the voters to “go ahead” and put their platform into effect have a right to expect that the “paid employees” of the state will help them give their ideas a fair trial.

It is of a piece with this of course that, when the voters shift their favor to a rival or opposing party, the bureaucracy should be equally willing to help the new majority succeed. Otherwise there is no solution to the problem of responsible government except to "turn the bunglers out" and let the victorious party man the public services with cadres of its choosing as far down the line as it may wish to go.

Lest anyone assume that to ask for this kind of constructive or creative neutrality will be to open the door to wide and sudden changes in the character of governmental services or policies, let him be reminded that in a healthy democracy violent swings or reversals simply fail to occur. As Disraeli once said, the Liberals take up where the Conservatives leave off and vice versa. There may be talk of revolution but the changes actually made will invariably be, as the historian William E. Dodd said in 1933 regarding Roosevelt's New Deal, "something less than revolution."

And lest anyone assume that civil servants are incapable of such creative neutrality, we may cite the receptivity of the British bureaucracy to the Labour Party's policy of "fair shares for all" in Britain after 1945 and the readiness of the American bureaucracy to help Eisenhower make good on his platform of "dynamic Conservatism" in 1953 and then to help Kennedy break ground along his New Frontier in 1961. Democracy is tantamount to permanent, or perhaps it would be better to say, continuous revolution and precisely for this reason the changes made at any one time will ordinarily be small. On occasion to be sure they may be substantial but even so they will remain within the range of what Harold Laski called a "revolution of consent."

Public administration admittedly is inseparable from politics as some writers on administration never tire of asseverating, but it is a subordinate branch of politics not the dominant branch. Top echelon administrators are and should be partners in policy-making but they are junior partners and should never forget it. That all this adds up to a workable system is evident from many angles but one proof too convenient not to mention is the figure cited by Professor Hans Simons in his address before the

Indian Institute of Public Administration only recently. The U. S. Civil service numbers approximately 2.5 million yet when the Democratic Party took over control of the Executive branch of the Government from the Republican Party in 1961, President Kennedy found it necessary to replace only about three hundred of the high level officials who had been appointed by Mr. Eisenhower.

But let us consider now some rather specific standards that have begun to acquire universal relevance in recent years. Perhaps the first is honesty. Any government anywhere which allows its employees to demand a "cut" or "kick-back" or "tip" for doing his plain duty will more and more bring on itself the contempt of the civilized world. Baksheesh is not only *passé*; it will soon be outlawed, just like begging on the streets.

The second standard is competence. Civil servants must "know their stuff" and habitual turn in an adequate performance. Moreover they will be expected at least to understand how things are done in more advanced countries with advanced techniques and equipment even though such equipment may not for some time be available for use in their own country.

What such competence requires on the part of top-level administrators is that they should not rest until they have gone the limit in organizing the division of labor in their respective agencies in such a way as to give each employee a little sphere of his own over which to preside and in which he can exercise a bit of creative discretion. Each employee should have at least some slight realm within which he can make final decisions and thus be encouraged to perfect his competence.

No perfect example comes to mind at once but there is a handy illustration from my student days at the University of Iowa which at any rate suggests the point. We graduate scholars used to chuckle—much too smartly as it seems to me in retrospect—over the stupidity of a man we called Iowa City's dumbest policeman, a cop who was so stupid that he could not even spell the names of the streets in town. One night he found a dead cat on the pavement directly in

front of 910 Dubuque street. Knowing that it was his duty to report the matter to the street department, he was nevertheless baffled for a moment because he could not trust himself to spell "Dubuque." Yet the bafflement lasted only for a moment. Dumb as he was he knew he had some discretion in his work. All he was obliged to do was to report the fact of dead animals on public property and the location where they could be found and picked up. So what did our dumb cop do? He bethought himself a moment, carried the dead cat one block to Clinton street, and then, all competence and serenity, filled out the notification slip: Dead cat on curbing at 910 Clinton Street. Moral: Every employee must have a little latitude for final decisions in order to whet his competence.

Another standard is that of courtesy—not the kind that is content with offering a caller a chair and then wasting his time with inattention or excuses but the kind that compliments him by trying to expedite a solution to his problem. And next to courtesy are neatness and cleanliness.

The last of these emerging standards is closely related to that of competence yet deserves separate identification and emphasis because of the pace at which things move in the world of contemporary technology. Let me first hint at the idea by recalling an anecdote pertaining to business administration in one of the newly independent nations of Africa. A Dutch firm which had installed a cold storage plant in the capital of this equatorial country received an urgent cable from the manager one day asking for an expert from the factory to repair some defect caused by improper maintenance lest a million dollars worth of produce spoil. Within an hour or so the Dutch firm had its man on a jet plane to make the necessary repairs. Arrived on the scene he asked for a hammer. Not finding one handy, the manager offered to go out and buy one for the expert post haste. He did his best—but it took four hours!

The quality we have in mind is, of course, *dispatch* or in other words speed and punctuality in serving the public and a minimum of forms to be filled out. The modern business and professional man, as likewise the ubiquitous tourist

trying to crowd as much as possible into his limited schedule, is coming to expect to be able to buy his postage stamps in two minutes rather than twenty, to get a reply to his wire in three hours rather than three days, and to receive an answer to his letter to an administrative agency in a week rather than a month or two or more. And he wants a hundred other services to be performed with comparable dispatch.

Time is not only money as Poor Richard's Almanac used to say, it is safety, it is convenience, it is pleasure. Lewis Mumford put it nicely in *The Culture of Cities*. The good life in an urban community—and more and more of us are becoming urbanities every year—is not so much a matter of good weeks and good days : it is a matter of good hours and good minutes ! Yea verily, dispatch is rapidly emerging as a universal standard in administration, public and otherwise.

THE SUBSTANCE OF ADMINISTRATION

The range and variety of facilities and services which concern public administration is being called upon to provide are now so vast that all we can hope to do in this final section is to highlight a few of the developments that herald the dawn of the age of universal standards.

Travel is broadening, they say, but it is also sobering. On such a journey as ours from California to India, first by car to New York and then by air to New Delhi, one could not but be impressed by the way in which most cities and countries are nowadays striving with all their might to maintain a certain level of excellence with regard to their public amenities and service—and how few are undermining their own futures by crass carelessness in this respect.

Let us note at random some examples of these emergent universal standards, mentioning by name only the places which deserve a bouquet. America and Germany have been so successful in routing their new highways around major cities rather than through them that they will in time turn every motorist or bus traveller against a country which

fails to emulate their example. Pennsylvania and New York go further by adorning their toll roads with superb service stations and moderately-priced restaurants every ten miles or so.

New York City, Copenhagen and Frankfurt are setting a standard in air port design and convenience that all the major cities of the world will sooner or later need to try to equal. Oslo gives every visitor a new conception not only of what a city hall should be like but also of how good metropolitan railway passenger transportation can be at its best, especially in terms of the punctuality of the trains and the courtesy of the conductors.

Copenhagen shows what can be done to preserve lots of greenery throughout a metropolitan area and not least how provision can be made for outdoor recreation, dining and festivals right in the centre of a city. SAS, the Scandinavian Airlines System is only partially an example of governmental administration, but let me not take leave of these Nordic countries without saluting the standard it and several other publicly managed air lines are setting in the field of civil aviation.

Germany symbolized for us the beauty of highways not profaned by billboard advertising and Munich the kind of concern municipal administration in a prosperous society ought to show especially for the performing arts such as opera. Austria made us realize how much one can learn from guided bus tours in a historic city when high standards are enforced in examining candidates for guide services.

Vienna matched Munich of course in setting a standard for public administration with respect to music and museums but it deserves special merit for its solution to the problem of street crossing and car parking in the heart of a metropolis. The pedestrian underpass at its busiest junction sets a standard so high that it has no chance to emerge as a universal standard for decades to come and then only in the largest cities. For it turns out to be not merely a neat underground passageway but a most agreeably utilitarian wonderland containing an information both, speciality shops, a newspaper stand, a bookstore, and a fine restau-

rant, all spick and span and, of course, air-conditioned. What comfort and convenience beneath that busy crossing ! And what a money maker for the municipal treasury too—just as the underground car park beneath another and more spacious junction promises to be.

Greece is a fine reminder of the opportunities and obligations resting upon governmental authority to foster glorious architecture—and of the rewards and dividends public administration can earn by the cultivation of beauty. Turkey's care and management of the Mausoleum of Ataturk compares favorably with the best practice in Europe and America and suggests to all who see it how a national shrine should be administered. . . Israel's prodigious achievements in bringing her desert lands under cultivation and in organizing her human resources for economic development are contributing significantly to the erection of a new standard by which national efforts to increase productivity will be judged. . . India is showing the world how fair and smooth election administration can be and thus by implication showing how fair and smooth it should be, even where electorates are massive in size and the voters largely illiterate.

But the coin has another side too. Some countries have yet to adopt the practice of the automatic forwarding of a tourist's mail. Some levy airport fees so high as to render it likely that in the long run they will defeat their own purpose. Many cities have yet to learn that at the cost of only a few simple signs printed in the major languages of the travelling public they could help their country earn a great deal of goodwill as well as more foreign exchange.

One country we visited was so gauche as even to deny innocent visitors a chance to look inside its parliament building in broad day light when the outside doors were open. Another staged a public ceremony so lacking in dignity and "smartness" that it would have been better for its international prestige to cancel it until the participants had acquired a bit of polish. Again, to judge by the tiringly ubiquitous display of the portrait of their current "leader," many countries claiming to be democracies are

going in for cults of personality. This will make the achievement of real democracy in the long run more difficult than it needs to be.

Procrastination in the delivery of mail and telegrams continues to be notorious in some countries of the Middle East. One capital city disgraced itself last year by allowing forty thousand residential quarters to remain vacant while more than a hundred thousand of its inhabitants were virtually shelterless. One country seems to excuse itself quite easily for occasional delays of from three to six months in paying its own employees their salaries. And yet another obliges the lowest of its scavengers to go on, in this day and age, submitting to the indescribable indignity of having to carry night soil buckets on their heads.

Truly public administration will have to make enormous strides in many places before all the nations of the modern world rise to the level of the standards now emerging. It is perforce a fact that bureaucracies can not improve their habits overnight any more than individuals. But progress grows by what it feeds upon. Let public administrators only develop a "passion for excellence" and the improvements they introduce will generate a pride of accomplishment that will lead to further efforts in the same direction. And the final result? In due course these increments will add up to what at least past generations would have regarded as utopia.

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